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Commercial Director Will Beedles Executive Art Editor Rick Cooke Executive Editor Paul Dove Marketing & Communications Manager Claire Brown
Printed by William Gibbons Email liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com. To subscribe visit www.reachsportshop.com





CELEBRATING SAFELY

Red floodlights illuminate St George's Hall to mark Liverpool FC's first top-flight title in 30 years, the grand neo-classical building also displaying the NHS rainbow. Club chief-executive Peter Moore wrote in the club's matchday programme: "Throughout this crisis our local community has remained at the heart of everything we do. Those whom we serve need our help now more than ever... It is the vulnerable who live in our city, those shielding and our key workers, who have given up too much for it all to be in vain, and that's why I wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate a very important point around our Premier League title achievement: please celebrate safely. We owe it to our city and its amazing people to avoid this disease impacting our community any further. Celebrating safely from home is the best way you can show your support right now."


YOU
POOL



CURTIS CAPS NEW DEAL

Twenty-four hours after signing a new long-term contract with the club, attacker Curtis Jones comes off the bench to score a late second for Liverpool against Aston Villa at Anfield, firing past ex-Reds keeper Pepe Reina after Sadio Mane had earlier opened the scoring. It meant a 24th consecutive home win in the top flight for Jürgen Klopp's side. The manager said: "I could not be more pleased or proud to see how Curtis has blossomed. Super attitude, brilliant application and a really important member of this squad now." The 19-year-old added: "It's my boyhood club and it's the whole of my family's club as well, so for me it's huge."



KLOPP OF THE WORLD



The day after that 19th top-flight title was confirmed, Reds boss **Jürgen Klopp** addressed the world's media via video-conference, and this is what the manager of the English champions had to say


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Congratulations Jürgen! What are your initial thoughts on winning your first Premier League title as Liverpool manager?

I'm happy. Really happy! Relieved. Last night I was overwhelmed, obviously. But it's a very, very good moment in my life. It's a mix of all kinds of emotions. It shows me that it's a really big achievement, I know that.

It was an incredible ride to get here, but what the boys did since the time I've been here has been exceptional and I'm just so happy for them that we could do it.

What does it feel like to bring so much joy to generations of Liverpool fans who idolise you now, just like Bill Shankly and Bob Paisley?

I think the people had a good, positive opinion about myself when I came in. That was really nice and helped a lot because it gave us time to achieve the things that we have achieved.

The players had to write their own history and stories so they were ready not to compare us too much with all these great, great, great figures in this club, and so that gave us time. We used that time pretty well, and so it could happen. That's normal and people are very positive about the manager of the team when you become champions.

The people know as well that I know how much it means to us and how important my coaches are. Without Pep, Pete, Vitor, John, Jack, Korny, Mona, Ray, Matt, Danielle, Julia and all the others it would not be possible and that's the truth.

I'm the face of it but a lot of the work, it's the others that do it. That's how it is.

Which message that you've received over the past 14 or 15 hours has meant the most?

I called my family I think ten seconds before the final whistle [at Stamford Bridge]. We had a Facetime call. I told them I loved them. They told me they loved me. We could not be together – that's not nice but that's how it is.

I then put the phone on the table and said, "Leave it on because in the next four, five seconds, something nice can happen!" They watched the game, so they knew it obviously. So that was a really, really nice moment.

As for all the other messages, I don't want to compare them. They were all great. They were all full of appreciation, respect, love and support. I cannot answer all of them so maybe I should use this opportunity to say I'm sorry that I cannot answer all the messages I got, but I probably can read all of them and that's probably what I will do in the next few days.



Have you had any doubts at all over this four-and-a-half year period?

Not doubts, but I didn't know that it would happen because the other teams are just too good so you have to improve every year.

We have to change things, to involve new things, as a year's really long, a season's really long, so you need to be lucky in some moments, especially with injuries and all that stuff. So I was never sure. You can never be sure that it will happen, but on the other side I didn't doubt it as I knew that we would become a really good football team.

But others are really good as well and that's why I have to say that the consistency we showed made all the difference. It's incredible. We were good four years ago. We were really good three years ago. We were unbelievably good last year and the consistency we showed there was already incredible. Then smashing the record pretty much to this point of the season – because obviously so far we don't have the final numbers in terms of points that we had last season – is absolutely exceptional and second-to-none.

It's really unbelievable and difficult to get there and it's all about the boys' commitment, desire and understanding of the club's heart and soul. That made it happen and I'm thankfully proud of this.

Steven Gerrard has said that this achievement puts you up there with Shankly, Paisley and Dalglish as icons of this club and that they should be build a statue of you outside Anfield...

I think they [Shankly and Paisley] got statues when they weren't here any more, right? I want to live for still 30 or 40 years, so I'm not interested in statues. Honestly. For sure, not in my lifetime.

I'm the manager of this team and we won the league and people obviously see this pretty positively, I can imagine. I'm very positive about that as well but we don't have to compare me with these



iconic figures. I don't know exactly how long Bill Shankly was at the club but what he did and where he picked the club up from, in the Second Division, this was unbelievable. Then Bob was his assistant and took over and won pretty much everything. Kenny Dalglish played for this club, became the player-manager and was immediately successful as a manager which is incredible, so from my point-of-view there is no comparison possible.

I'm here since four-and-a-half years, came from Germany over here and tried to do my job. I love the city, I love the club, yes that's true – but there's no comparison possible and especially not needed.

You've won the Champions League, the Club World Cup and the Premier League, so what's next?

[Laughs] I don't know, what is next? The last 13 months have been pretty special for us, that's true, and I would like to include the year



before as well because that was just an incredible football-time in my life.

Winning the amount of games, getting this amount of points is absolutely exceptional and I didn't experience it before, to be honest. I've had good parts during my career but not that good, so I couldn't be more thankful to be part of that.

The consistency the boys showed is so exceptional, I cannot describe it. And we will not stop. That's it: we will not stop. We really have to – and will – stay focused because we see the opportunity. But 'will not stop' does not mean that we will win everything. We just want to improve because the other teams are really good already and will be better.

[Man] City is anyway already exceptional and so I cannot promise that we will win something. What I can promise is that we will try everything to improve and that's possible because there are football parts we can improve, of course.

The consistency is difficult to improve. If you could keep that level of consistency that would be nice because even the games we have lost, we were not bad. For example, when we lost last season at Man City, it was because of eleven millimetres or whatever, so it was not a bad game from us against a super team.

We get a super, super push by our supporters. We have every two weeks the best atmosphere in football and we know how much it means to our people, so that gives us a boost as well.

So we have a good situation and whether we use our history rather than being held back by it and stuff like this, is important. It's in a good place. That's why we are here and we will make sure that we are still good from now on.



Have you ever come across a group of players that work as hard as this group?

Yes. If you asked about my team at Mainz, they worked very hard as well. They were not as good unfortunately, but they worked really, really hard. My team at Dortmund worked really hard as well.

This group, it's the mix. Yes, we have a lot of really, really good players, world-class players actually, but other clubs have

world-class players as well. The consistency comes from the mix with determination, with buying into the idea, with attitude, with character, with personality. That makes the difference and that is what makes this group so special.

They are all very confident, of course, because we won some stuff, but they are still humble. As long as we stay humble we have a good chance to be successful in the future as well.

What do you think this means for the red half of the city of Liverpool?

You'd better ask the people what it means to them. I know that it means the world to them. It means the world to me. It's just exceptional.

I know that we have met so many people here in Liverpool and they tell me exactly how much it means to them so I don't think I underestimate that. It's massive.

What I really love is that when you have a successful football club in your city it always gives the city a lift. I think at this time all cities in the world can need a lift but Liverpool as well and I'm really happy about that.

With this title, as well as it is a sign that we played a good season, it is as well a sign for the future. There is some football you are looking forward to and there are some atmospheres you are looking forward to, and we need that at this moment in time as well, so I'm really happy for our people.

You spoke with such emotion after the title was confirmed but at which moment this season did you know that you were going to win the Premier League?

I'm not 100 per cent sure, but I think I had a little idea of it the last weekend before the lockdown. We won against Bournemouth and [Manchester] City lost the next day against Manchester United, so I think [the lead] was 25 points with City one game-in-hand and that was a moment when I thought: okay, it looks pretty good. But I didn't need to know about it 100 per cent in that moment.

Then the world changed obviously and we had three months in a lockdown. That was pretty difficult and I didn't think too much about it, honestly. But that was the only moment when I thought maybe.

Until then, honestly you only have to ask yourself what did you think after the Everton [derby] game when City was playing like the stars from the sky and we played against Everton and thought: oh there's still a chance. So that's how it is. As long as it's not decided you cannot celebrate it and we didn't.

We played the Crystal Palace game and made it clear that we are still here as well, and then the rest is already history.

When you got 97 points last season, there must have been a part of you that thought: what more can we do? What more did you do?

We didn't do more – we did it again. I'm not sure it was possible to do more than we did last year because from a training-intensity point-of-view and stuff like this we were already squeezing everything out.

It helped massively that we won the Champions League in the end so we didn't go out of that season with empty hands or with losing the league title, if you want. We left the season with a Champions League win and that was obviously massive. That takes you from the nearly man to a serial winner or whatever people are making of this kind of thing. That was the situation and that's clear in this league.



WE GET A SUPER, SUPER PUSH BY OUR SUPPORTERS. WE HAVE EVERY TWO WEEKS THE BEST ATMOSPHERE IN FOOTBALL AND WE KNOW HOW MUCH IT MEANS TO OUR PEOPLE, SO THAT GIVES US A BOOST

If you want to win the league, it's pretty much not allowed to lose any game because City is usually not losing football games. That's how it is. They've never stopped since Pep is there. They've never stopped and we will try that as well.

We will try not to stop. We will try to improve. We will try to make things happen and make things special. This is now only a moment. Today we sit here and talk about it. Tomorrow we train and then we prepare [for the next] game. That's how it is.

It's still a nice moment but we have seven games to go and we want to play our best football in these games and hopefully we can do that.

The players' mentality has just been 'again and again.' It must be reassuring that they want to push on from here?

Look, I'm nothing without my coaches and I'm even less without my players. That's how it is and we have a common idea and we have a common dream.

We have big dreams. We have always had them and that doesn't mean that we will fulfil them, but I think we should give them a proper try and that's what we've done since we are here together. It will never be less, and the more people dream, the more important and stronger it gets.

So of course without the players who buy into this kind of philosophy, if you want, I have no chance. So yes, we will not stop.

We have to show that on the pitch obviously. If we play two games where we are a little bit less here or there, all of you will tell us "That's not the Liverpool from last year" or whatever. It's okay to ask these questions because if you really go into the detail, then you'd see that already for three or four years we've tried to squeeze everything out. It didn't work out always, but the intensity level was never less, it just was not as successful.

Now the mix-up is really good. The boys are in a good age-group. They are more experienced, more confident, more convinced, and we should use that as long as we can. But we know that other teams are out there and want to do, maybe not exactly the same but a lot to improve their situation.

There will be hard fights, but that's how the Premier League is. It's a hard fight every weekend or every three days. And the hard fight starts already for us.

You have the potential to become, statistically, the greatest champions in history with more than 100 points – how big an objective is that for the remaining games?

Getting these kind of points tallies sounds pretty nice to me but I'm not sure it's possible because six of the remaining seven games we play [are] in a very short period of time, which means every three days, so we will have to make a lot of changes.

We will really try but we need to be lucky. Hopefully we can make sure nobody gets injured but we need to be lucky there with so many games. If in the first game somebody gets injured he might not be able to play in the next five or six. That makes it really tricky for all of us, so that will be the most intense period.

That was by the way the reason why I wanted to win it last night [the City result] and not on the pitch whenever – just to make it! We worked two-and-a-half years on that and I didn't want to wait any longer. First of all City, then Aston Villa fighting to stay in the league, then Brighton, Burnley, Arsenal, Chelsea and Newcastle. It's unbelievable and they are all fighting either for a European place or staying in the league, so that will be really tough and so I don't see that [record points tally] in this moment, but of course we will try.



Speaking to the people of this city, they have a fondness for you that goes beyond football – how do you explain that?

I feel very close to this city even when I can't go into the city! It's been four-and-a-half years and from the first days I obviously clicked with the people and the welcome for me was great. I knew about expectations but I felt immediately that the people wanted to give us time.

I love the way they see life. I love the way they want to be different and are different but are very special in a very good way. I love Scousers. We both come from a region where they speak a pretty strong and strange dialect. Where I come from nobody understands a word outside that and with Scouse, it's pretty similar.

So yes we are really close and that's good and that's why we like being here. If I did not like the people, I would not stay here for nine years or whatever. That's what we've obviously agreed on.

Life for me is a lot about football but I have other sides as well and if we didn't feel comfortable with that then we wouldn't be here, so it's a good package.

I LOVE SCOUSERS. WE BOTH COME FROM A REGION WHERE THEY SPEAK A PRETTY STRONG AND STRANGE DIALECT. WHERE I COME FROM NOBODY UNDERSTANDS A WORD OUTSIDE THAT, AND WITH SCOUSE, IT'S PRETTY SIMILAR!






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FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

Friday-night football at Anfield got the 2019/20 Premier League season underway and the Reds would end the evening top of the league. A sign of things to come. The European champions had come to close to winning the title a year earlier, accumulating 97 points only to finish as runners-up, but signalled their intent to go one better against newly-promoted Norwich City. An early own-goal from Canaries defender Grant Hanley got the scoring underway, before first-half strikes from Mo Salah, Virgil van Dijk and Divock Origi had the Reds 4-0 up before the break. Adrian came on for the injured Alisson to make his Liverpool debut, and Teemu Pukki got a goal back, but Jürgen Klopp's side started the campaign as they meant to go on. By winning. It quickly became a theme.



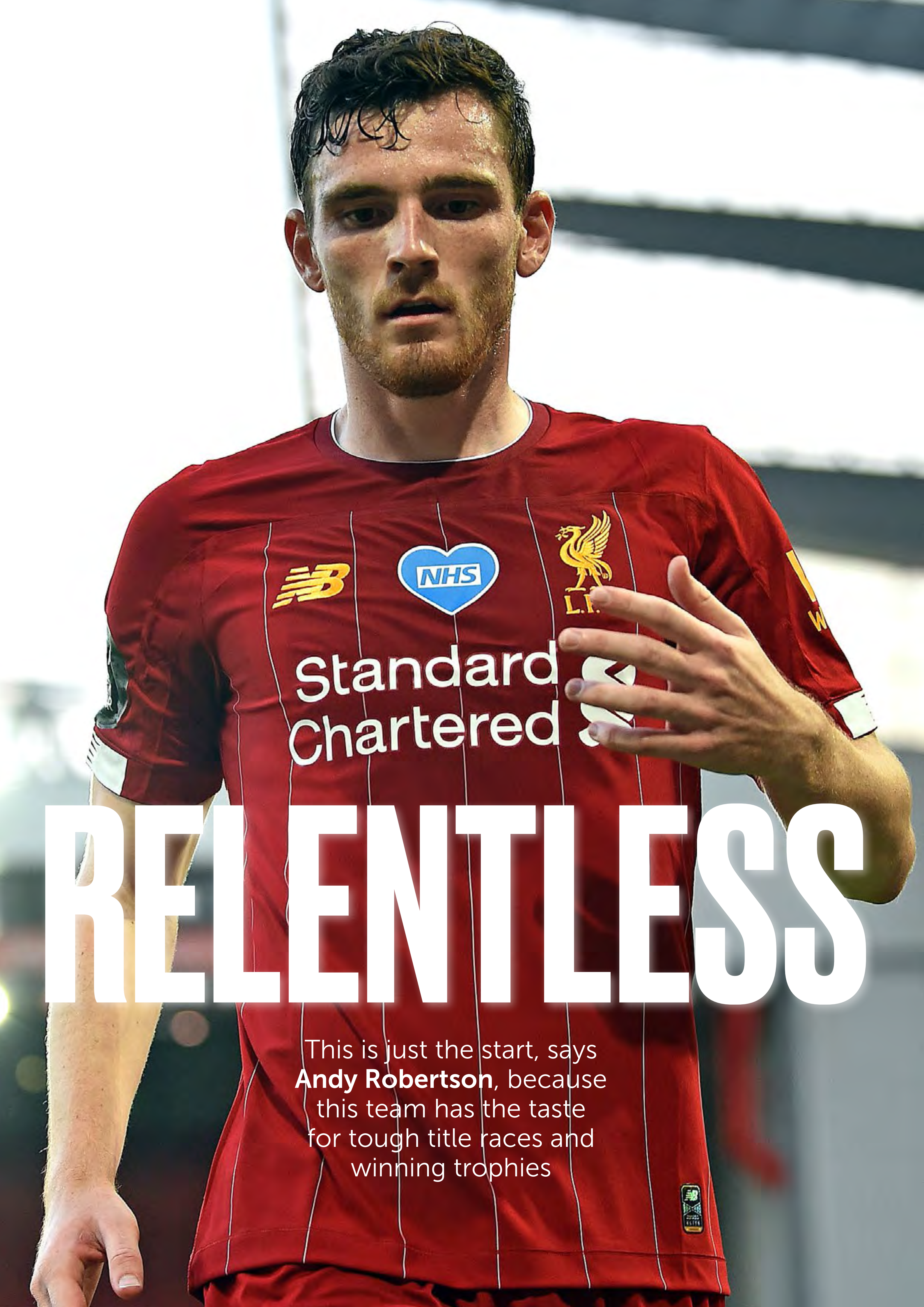

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JOY FOR JOEL

If you ever wondered what if feels like to score in front of the Kop at Anfield for the first time then take a good long look at this picture. With thousands of smiling, happy, joyous Kopite faces in front of him, Joel Matip leapt higher than the proverbial salmon to celebrate putting Liverpool in front at home to Arsenal in August. The big Reds defender had scored once at Anfield before, but that was down at the Annie Road end. So when Matip headed home the opening goal against the Gunners, from Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner, in front of the most famous stand in football, he made sure that he celebrated it in style. Liverpool went on to win 3-1, Mo Salah netting a second-half penalty and a brilliant solo goal, as the Redmen equalled the club record of 12 consecutive top-flight wins. They were only getting started.


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RELENTLESS

This is just the start, says **Andy Robertson**, because this team has the taste for tough title races and winning trophies

Jürgen Klopp has spoken before about how much he loves the Andy Robertson story. To Liverpudlians, the Scot's route to serial silverware winner at Anfield is well-known and the joy at adding the Premier League title to his roll of honour was writ large across his face in the hours after it was confirmed.

Lest we forget, Robertson had ended the 2014/15 and 2016/17 seasons being relegated with Hull City. However, his career path has been on an upwards trajectory since he swapped Humberside for Merseyside in the summer of 2017. He ended 2017/18 by playing in a Champions League final and 2018/19 by starring in another, this time helping the Reds claim the famous trophy for a sixth time.

And after a 2019/20 campaign which had already seen him add winner's medals for the UEFA Super Cup and FIFA Club World Cup to his growing haul, the icing on the cake came last month with the latest much-coveted addition to the collection.

Given Liverpool FC's history, it seems only fitting that the captain of Scotland should be such an important part of the club's first Premier League-winning squad.

There were two Robertsons, both called Tommy, in the club's inaugural top-flight title success of 1900/01 and that team also included such Scottish luminaries as captain Alex Raisbeck, Bill Goldie and Billy Dunlop.

Raisbeck also led the Reds to their second top-flight championship six years later with Dunlop again playing a prominent part.

Full-back Donald Mackinlay was captain when Liverpool lifted the trophy back-to-back in 1921/22 and 1922/23, figuring alongside half-back Jock McNab in championship sides managed by David Ashworth and then Lanarkshire-born Matt McQueen.

The legendary Billy Liddell and Willie Fagan were key figures in the 1946/47 triumph. So were skipper Ron Yeats, Ian St John and Willie Stevenson in Bill Shankly's title-winning sides of 1963/64 and 1965/66, while his reshaped league winners of 1972/73 benefited from eight goals by Peter Cormack.

Beyond that, the Liverpool side that enjoyed great success under Bob Paisley, Joe Fagan and Kenny Dalglish, capturing an incredible 10 titles between 1975/76 and 1989/90, featured a Scottish flavour from Cormack and Edinburgh-born Brian Hall through to Dalglish, Graeme Souness, Alan Hansen, Steve Nicol, John Wark, Kevin MacDonald, Glasgow-born Ray Houghton and Gary Gillespie.

Words: William Hughes

So it's only right and proper that the class of 2019/20 should have some Scottish blood in its DNA and Robbo couldn't be happier!

Asked how 'Andy Robertson, Premier League winner' sounds, he says: "Amazing. Obviously we've had to wait a long time. The three months of lockdown was long for everyone on the planet but for us to be waiting for something that we haven't achieved for 30 years, it was extra long for us and our fans.

"To get over the line is such a good feeling and it's for everyone who had to wait 30 years. Thirteen weeks is a short time compared to the people that have had to wait so long for this. There are generations that haven't seen us win the league and we've managed to change that."

Having missed out on Premier League action for more than three months, Robertson was frustrated at having to sit out the first game after the resumption. He didn't make the matchday 20 for the Merseyside derby with Everton at Goodison Park due to a minor injury. But he was back in action and at his marauding best as the Reds thrashed Crystal Palace 4-0 at Anfield to pick up the three points which effectively saw them crowned champions.





He also provided his eighth PL assist of the season for Fabinho's wonder-goal just after the break.

"It was hard not playing in front of 55,000 fans at Anfield against Crystal Palace but we felt their energy," he recalls. "We knew that they were there in spirit and we knew they were supporting behind their screens."

With the players and coaching staff having been tested for COVID-19 twice-a-week within their team bubble, the Reds decided to watch the Chelsea v Manchester City game at their hotel together while enjoying a barbecue.

You will have no doubt witnessed the social-media footage of the scenes of celebration at the final whistle as Chelsea's 2-1 victory meant City could not overhaul the Reds' incredible points tally of 86. The manager and a number of the players were emotional in the hours that followed.

"Look, it's emotional winning trophies regardless but to win the Premier League title for this club it's especially so," says Andy. "Last season we felt so much how desperately the supporters wanted to win it and this season luckily we've done that and we've let the fans hopefully enjoy it a bit more.

"Like I say, those 13 weeks that they had to wait until we were back on the pitch was long for them. We're one big family and we all deserve it. We're Premier League champions and that's something that I'll never get bored of saying!"

Robertson admits that watching the Chelsea-City clash was not easy and the decision to do so was taken almost more in hope than expectation. But the victory, secured by goals from Christian Pulisic and Willian, was especially sweet for him coming on 25 June, his mother's birthday.

"It was intense [watching the game]," he admits. "We decided as a team that we would come together just on the off-chance that Man City would drop points.

"Man City are an incredible team that have pushed us the whole way these last two seasons. They obviously beat us with an incredible tally last season and they've been amazing this season too but we've been better. That's the truth.

"We've been so relentless in the way that we've played all season. We believed that coming together would be the best way forward and thankfully it proved that way.

"As I say, the 90 minutes were intense especially when [Kevin] De





Bruyne put in a worldie of a free-kick and then Raheem Sterling's through one-on-one the next minute. Just then you think: okay we're going to need to go and get a point at least at the Etihad the following week. But luckily what happened, happened, and now we're champions and I think its thoroughly deserved.

"We've been a long time waiting for it and we managed to do it on my mum's birthday which made it extra special for me."

The 26-year-old left-back has been credited with helping redefine the role of a modern full-back. By the time the title was confirmed, Robertson and his counterpart on the right side of the pitch, Trent Alexander-Arnold, had provided assists for 20 of Liverpool's 70 goals, cementing their status as a key part of the team's attack as well as defence.

Asked about the secret behind the success of this red machine, Robertson says it has simply been about consistency.

"I've probably touched on it – we've been relentless. Games where people thought we'd maybe drop points in, we haven't. We've come from behind in games. We've scored so many late goals. This team never gives up. We showed that last season too but unfortunately we came up against a Man City team that never gave

AT ONE POINT YOU DID WONDER ABOUT WHETHER THE SEASON WOULD FINISH. DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF LOCKDOWN EVERYTHING WAS UP IN THE AIR. LIFE WAS UP IN THE AIR, NEVER MIND FOOTBALL


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WE'VE BEEN RELENTLESS. GAMES WHERE PEOPLE THOUGHT WE'D MAYBE DROP POINTS IN, WE HAVEN'T. WE'VE COME FROM BEHIND IN GAMES. WE'VE SCORED SO MANY LATE GOALS. THIS TEAM NEVER GIVES UP

up either. They were absolutely incredible last season but this was our season.

"We knew every point was a prisoner and we've shown that. We've not dropped many points and against every team we've shown 100 per cent. We've turned up in every single game and before the lockdown the fans were loving it, really enjoying it, and then of course we had to go behind-closed-doors.

"Nobody knew how much that would impact us, but against Crystal Palace we showed why we were the champions-to-be and we put in a fantastic performance. If that was our last game to then go and be champions, then you won't get much better than that I don't think."

The no26 also admits that those celebrations at Formby Hall were tinged with an element of relief.

"At one point you did wonder about whether the season would finish. During the first two weeks of lockdown everything was up in the air. Life was up in the air, never mind football. Football took a back-step massively and we probably didn't even think of football.

"Then our attention started to turn. Will football return, how will it return, and stuff like that. Luckily, I think the Premier League got it right. It's easy for us to say that now because we're champions but nobody wanted to become champions or get relegated without the league finishing.

"We've done the right thing. Everyone's tested, everyone's safe and while the games have not been the same without the fans, they've been good enough and luckily now we're champions and we can look forward to the rest of the games.

"We can try to enjoy them and we want to pick up points because I think every club in the Premier League knows that we've only got a short break before we're into next season and we want to keep the momentum going.

"We need to keep winning games and hopefully take that into next season."

In his matchday programme notes for the home game against Aston Villa at the start of this month, Jürgen Klopp wrote about how much he likes the line 'We're never gonna stop' in the Allez Allez Allez song. And Robertson says that although the Reds face a punishing schedule in the final weeks of the campaign they have no intention of stepping off the gas.



WE'VE GOT THAT 'C' ABOVE OUR NAME NOW AND I ENJOYED WATCHING THE NEWS WITH OUR NAMES IN GOLD AND IT'S BEEN THOROUGHLY DESERVED

"After the Palace game, we had seven games left and our aim was to look to win every game. We don't want to get into a mindset of settling for defeats just because we've won the league. That's not who we are. That's not in our identity and we need to carry that into next season.

"We've got that 'C' above our name now and I enjoyed watching the news with our names in gold and it's been thoroughly deserved. But it's not our style to get sucked into making statements or predictions about records and so on. Our approach has always been one game at a time so why would we change it?

"The other stuff looks after itself if you do your job in each game. We want to keep the momentum going because, as I say, it's a short break until next season. That will be our aim.

"Hopefully in the seasons to come we can win more trophies and keep that going because this team is incredible, the manager's incredible, the staff are incredible and the fans are incredible.

"We want to win more trophies for this club because there's no better feeling."

THERE'S ONLY TWO **TOMMY ROBBOS!**

Tommy Robertson was so good during Liverpool FC's maiden Division One title-winning side that manager Tom Watson often picked him twice!

You see, the Reds had two Scots with the same name in their ranks in that groundbreaking 1900/01 season and the pair started together in 25 of the 34 league fixtures.

One Tommy Robertson was an ever-present in that team. On 30 March 1898, Liverpool paid Hearts a fee of £350 in exchange for Scotland internationals Robertson, a winger, and inside-right John Walker. The Northern Athletic Football Guide claimed he was "fast, ever clever with the ball, and 'class' writ large in every movement."

He made a total of 141 appearances for Liverpool and scored 35 goals – including nine in that league-winning campaign - before rejoining Hearts in 1902. He later returned to England for a spell with Manchester United.

The 'other' Tommy Robertson joined the Reds from Stoke City on 26 April 1900 for a sum of £400. In the dressing-room he was known as 'Tom' in order for things to be less confusing! The full-back was reportedly a powerful striker of the ball who timed his tackles to perfection.

He was only on Liverpool's books for two years but played his part in 1900/01 as the title was secured by two points from runners-up Sunderland. He then played for Southampton and Brighton before taking the common route of many ex-footballers by running a pub following his retirement.

He was described as a quiet guy who didn't enjoy the media spotlight. Indeed it was said that he would rather walk on hot coals than be interviewed by a football reporter!



First Division champions, 1900-01. *Back (left to right)*: Ottey, Goliver, McGuigan, Foster, S. Hunter, J. Hunter, Howell; *centre*: Soulsby, Wilson, Raybould, Robertson, Perkins, Goldie, Parry; *front*: Walker, Dunlop, Raisbeck, Cox, Robertson.

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SINGING FOR SADIO

'Sad-i-o, Ma-né! Running down the wing, Ma-né! Hear the Kopites sing, Ma-né! When we won it in Madrid.' Inspired by ABBA's *Voulez-Vous*, the travelling Kop had a new song for Sadio Mane when they were in Madrid to see Liverpool winning the Champions League. Three months later they were behind the goal inside Burnley's Turf Moor singing the Senegalese star's name after he scored the Reds' second goal in a 3-0 win. "The second goal, brilliant, just brilliant," said Jürgen Klopp afterwards. "Winning the ball, really quick decision-making and then a super pass from Bobby and a super finish from Sadio." It was Mane's fourth goal of the season in just his fourth start, not bad considering he spent the summer playing for Senegal in the Africa Cup of Nations instead of having a rest.



ADAM EVENS IT UP

Liverpool supporters had waved inflatable European Cups and number sixes in the away-end before kick-off to remind their hosts who the continental champions were, but it looked like the Reds would be waving away their nine-month unbeaten record in the Premier League until Adam Lallana intervened. A controversial Marcus Rashford goal – VAR ignoring a foul on Divock Origi in the build-up – was allowed to stand and with five minutes to play the hosts were still ahead. Then a low cross from Andy Robertson flew across goal to the far-post where Adam Lallana was waiting to tuck the ball home. It was Lallana's first goal for Liverpool since May 2017 and the travelling Kop celebrated like it was a winner. The Reds' 100 per cent record since the start of the season was over, but their title bid remained firmly on track.


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IN OUR LIVERPOOL

Anfield, one fine day, and aerial images taken during the lull of late-May lockdown



When the brakes were applied to football a few months ago it was a chance for the club to capture the stadium and its environs from the air in the context of Liverpool's famous cityscape. Look closely here and above the lush green turf, blood-red seats and latticed roofs you can see (from left) the new Royal Liverpool Hospital construction site, Everton Water Tower, the Metropolitan and Anglican Cathedrals, St John's Beacon and (far right, just about) the twin peaks of the Royal Liver Building.

HOME

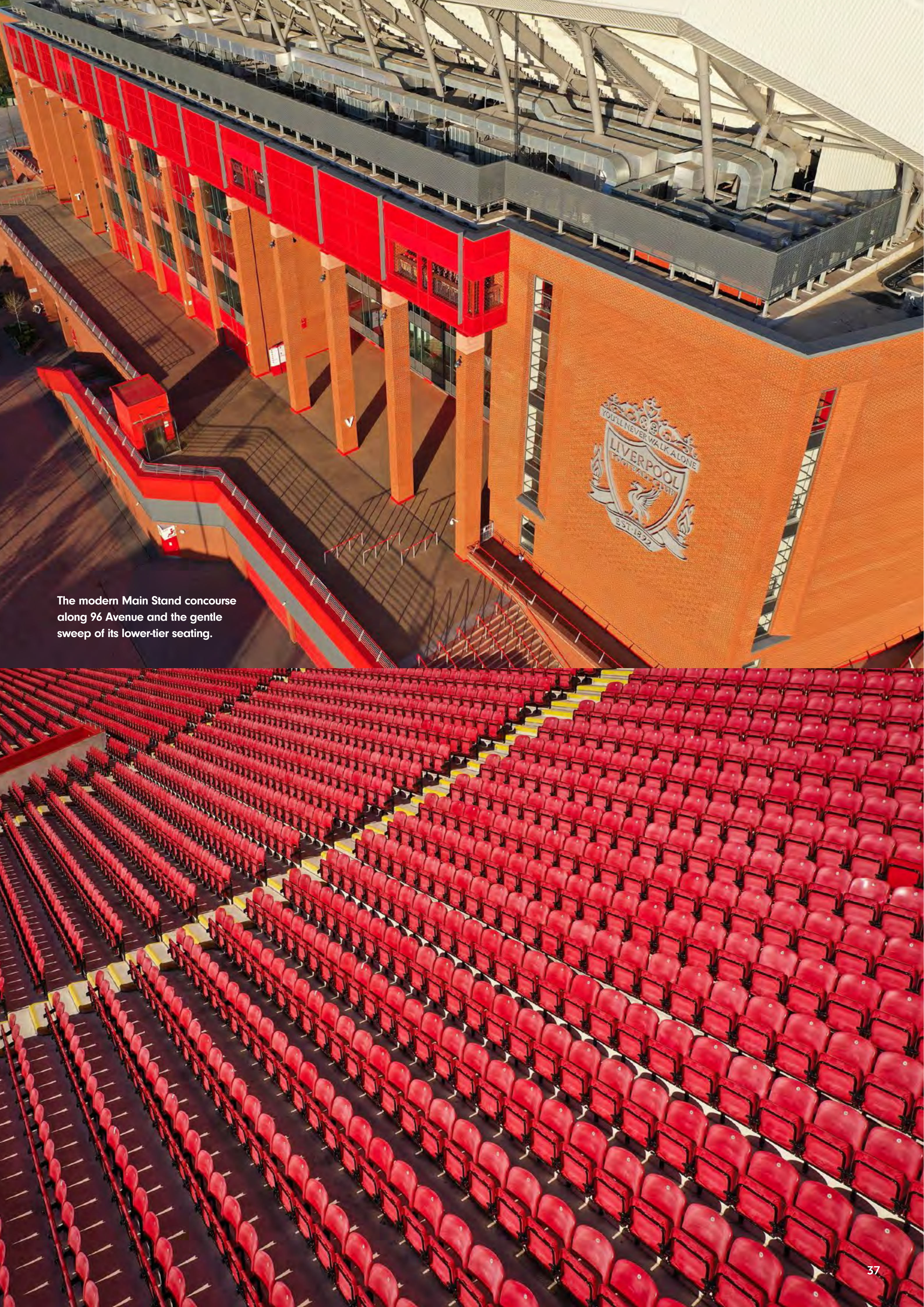

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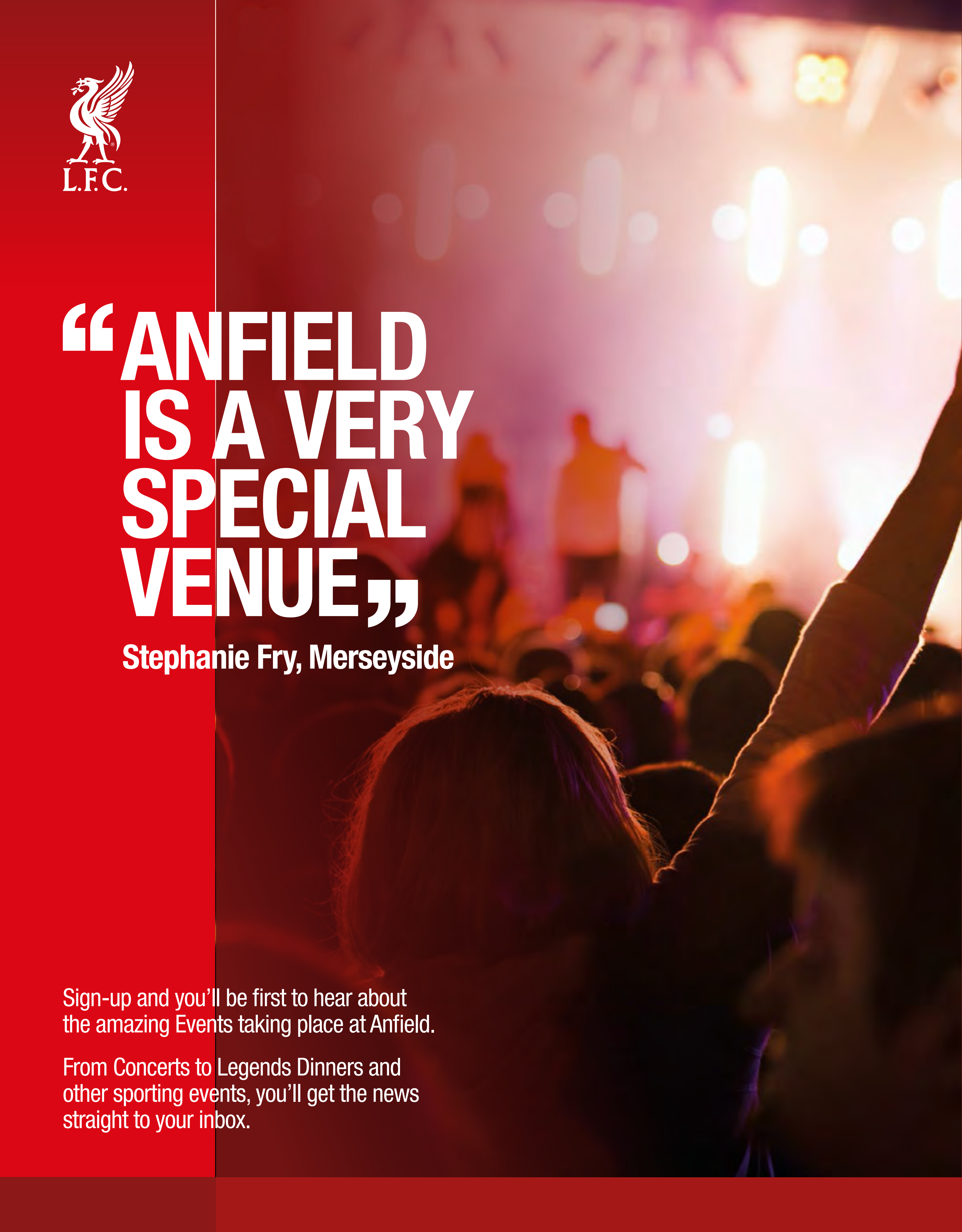


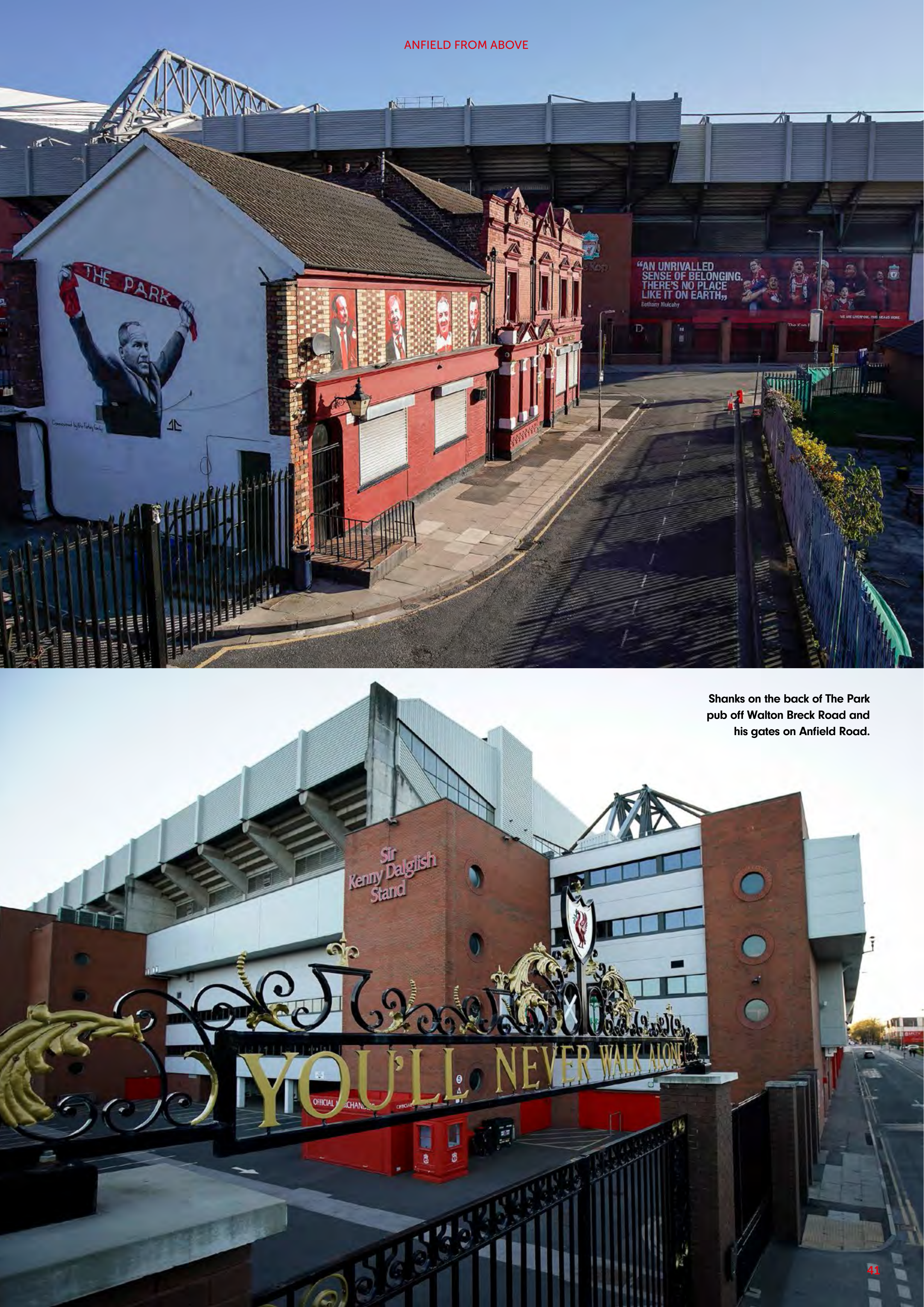
The modern Main Stand concourse along 96 Avenue and the gentle sweep of its lower-tier seating.



Step-ladder terrace housing between Anfield Road (below-left) and Walton Breck Road (centre).




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"ANFIELD IS A VERY SPECIAL VENUE"
Stephanie Fry, Merseyside
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From Concerts to Legends Dinners and other sporting events, you'll get the news straight to your inbox.



Shanks on the back of The Park pub off Walton Breck Road and his gates on Anfield Road.



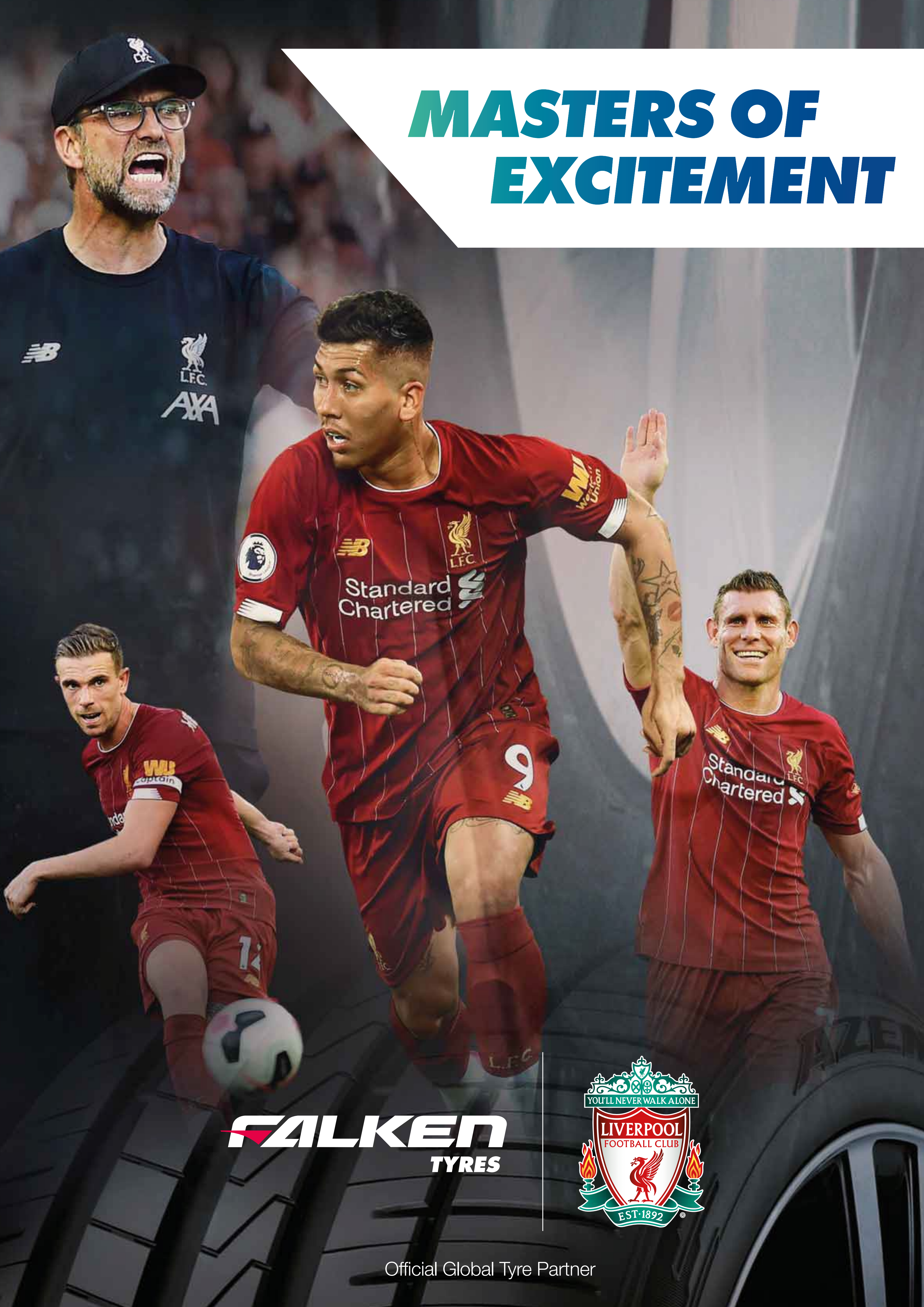
A HOUSE THROUGH TIME

How LFC's famous home looked 30 years ago, 15 years ago, 12 years ago...

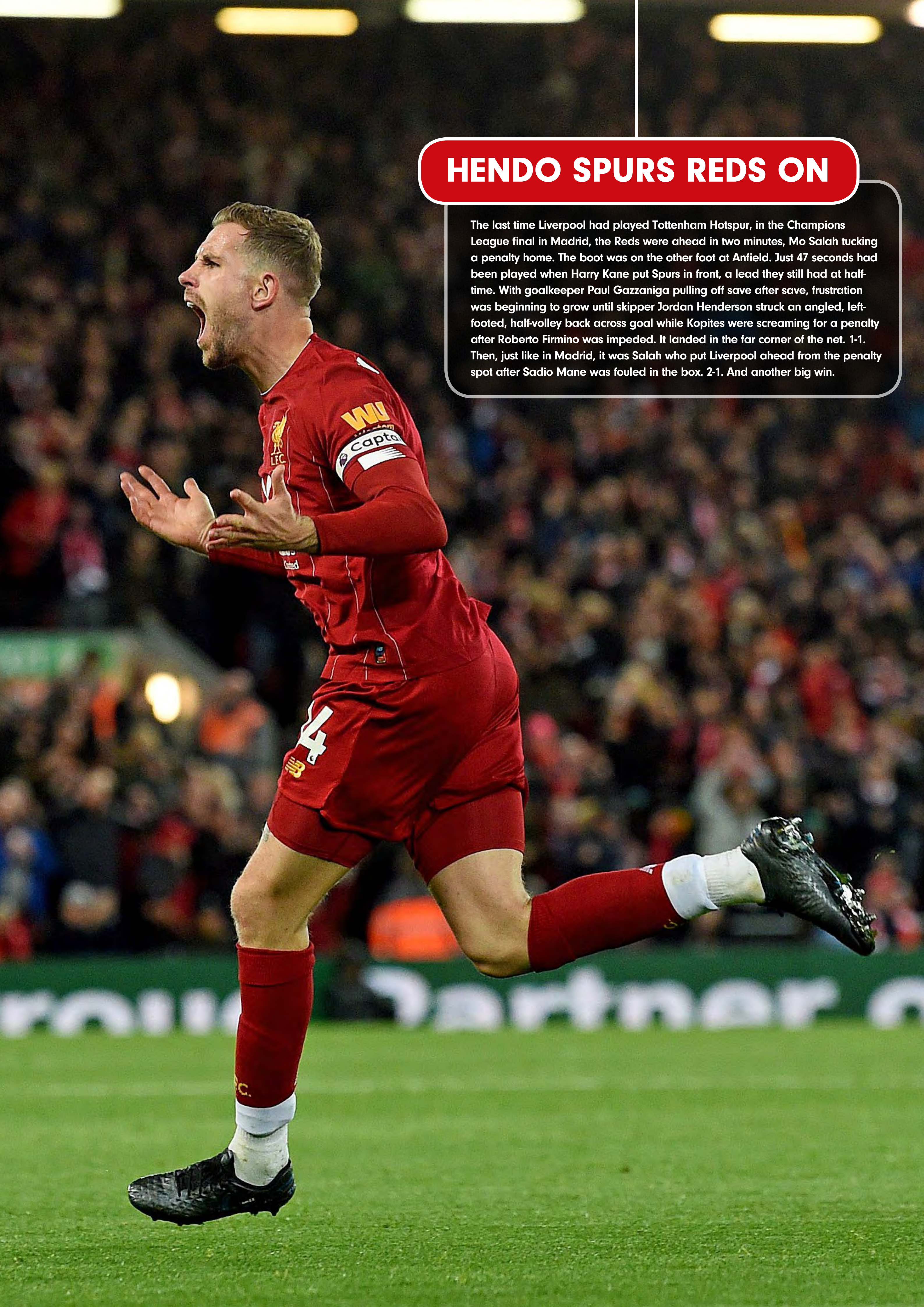
All four stands in 1989 before redevelopment (above) and the night of the 2005 Champions League final homecoming (below)



From 2008, looking southwest towards the city-centre and river with the Wirral peninsula and Welsh hills in the distance.



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HENDO SPURS REDS ON

The last time Liverpool had played Tottenham Hotspur, in the Champions League final in Madrid, the Reds were ahead in two minutes, Mo Salah tucking a penalty home. The boot was on the other foot at Anfield. Just 47 seconds had been played when Harry Kane put Spurs in front, a lead they still had at half-time. With goalkeeper Paul Gazzaniga pulling off save after save, frustration was beginning to grow until skipper Jordan Henderson struck an angled, left-footed, half-volley back across goal while Kopites were screaming for a penalty after Roberto Firmino was impeded. It landed in the far corner of the net. 1-1. Then, just like in Madrid, it was Salah who put Liverpool ahead from the penalty spot after Sadio Mane was fouled in the box. 2-1. And another big win.





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CHIEF STEWARD



A THRILLER AT VILLA

Aston Villa away. The first weekend of November. An afternoon when it looked like Liverpool's unbeaten run was about to end. Dean Smith's side took a first-half lead and with 86 minutes gone they were still ahead, surviving a controversial VAR call that disallowed a Roberto Firmino goal for an offside armpit. Yet this Liverpool side showed again how they can put the 'red' into 'incredible' by turning a likely defeat into three points. Andy Robertson supplied the equaliser, darting in at the far-post to head Sadio Mane's 87th-minute cross into the net. Most sides would, have settled for a point, but not this Liverpool. Deep into stoppage-time, Mane stooped to glance Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner into the net and send the travelling Kop absolutely wild. It was one of *the* big moments of the season, a test of character passed to earn another victory.



ALISSON! THE QUIZ

Twenty ways to tell if you've really been paying attention to the man between the LFC posts



A, B, C or D

1 As of this month (July 2020) how old is Alisson?
(a) 26 (b) 27 (c) 28 (c) 29

2 He won four Campeonato Gaucho (regional league titles) with which Brazilian club between 2013 and 2016?
(a) Internacional
(b) Gremio
(c) Novo Hamburgo
(d) Juventude

3 After signing for AS Roma in 2016 he spent his first season there as understudy to which goalkeeper?
(a) Doni
(b) Maarten Stekelenburg
(c) Morgan De Sanctis
(d) Wojciech Szczesny



4 Alisson made his Derby della Capitale ('Derby of the capital') debut in November 2017 as Roma beat Lazio 2-1 – but which ex-Red was in the Lazio team?
(a) Alberto Aquilani
(b) Lucas Leiva
(c) Luis Alberto
(d) Andrea Dossena

5 Liverpool beat Roma 5-2 at Anfield in the 2018 Champions League semi-final first leg, but which Reds player didn't score past Alisson that night?
(a) Roberto Firmino
(b) Sadio Mane
(c) Gini Wijnaldum
(d) Mo Salah

6 Alisson signed for Liverpool FC in July 2018 – but which shirt number did he wear throughout season 2018/19 for the Reds?
(a) 1
(b) 13
(c) 22
(d) 31

7 Which club did Liverpool beat 4-0 at Anfield when he made his Reds debut in August 2018?
(a) West Ham United
(b) AFC Bournemouth
(c) Cardiff City
(d) Huddersfield Town

8 The first away team to score past Alisson at Anfield was Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League – who got the goal?
(a) Angel di Maria
(b) Neymar
(c) Kylian Mbappe
(c) Thomas Meunier

9 Alisson didn't lose any of his first 20 Premier League games as a Liverpool player, breaking a club record held by...
(a) Pepe Reina
(b) Alvaro Arbeloa
(c) Javier Mascherano
(d) Fernando Torres

10 Which Manchester City player missed a penalty when stepping up to face Alisson at Anfield in November 2018?
(a) Riyad Mahrez
(b) Gabriel Jesus
(c) Sergio Aguero
(d) Raheem Sterling

11 Which musical instrument does Alisson play?
(a) Piano
(b) Guitar
(c) Saxophone
(d) Accordion

12 At the end of his first season here Alisson won the Premier League Golden Glove for keeping the most clean-sheets – how many?
(a) 18
(b) 20
(c) 21
(d) 23





ALISSON! THE QUIZ



13 What new Champions League final record did Alisson set when the Reds beat Spurs 2-0 in Madrid in June 2019?
(a) First Brazilian goalkeeper to win it
(b) Most saves in a CL final without conceding
(c) Longest throw-out by a goalkeeper recorded in a CL final
(d) Fewest saves in a CL final without conceding

14 Alisson played in every game as Brazil won the 2019 Copa America. How many goals did he concede during the entire tournament?
(a) 0 (b) 1 (c) 2 (d) 3

15 France Football magazine voted Alisson as the best goalkeeper in the world in 2019 and awarded him a trophy named after which legendary goalkeeper?
(a) Peter Schmeichel
(b) Gordon Banks
(c) Gianluigi Buffon
(d) Lev Yashin

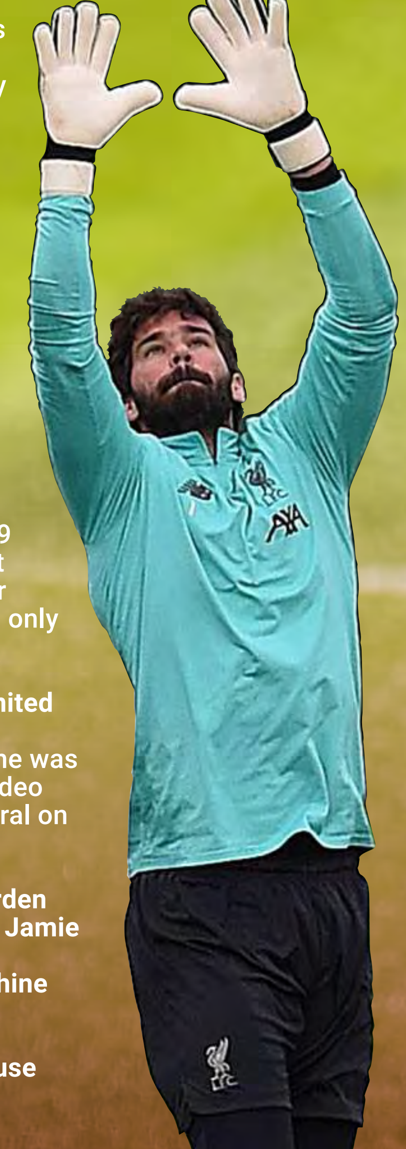
16 Earlier this season he was sent off against which Premier League opponents at Anfield?
(a) Brighton & Hove Albion
(b) Norwich City
(c) Southampton
(d) Newcastle United

17 Mo Salah scored a famous 90th-minute goal against Manchester United in January after being assisted by Alisson, but what colour kit was the Liverpool keeper wearing that day?
(a) Green (b) Yellow
(c) Pink (d) Black

18 In which of the following competitions has Alisson made the most appearances for Liverpool?
(a) FA Cup (b) Carabao Cup
(c) FIFA Club World Cup
(d) UEFA Super Cup

19 Between 1 December 2019 and 23 February 2020 he kept 10 clean-sheets in 11 Premier League games. Who were the only club to score past him?
(a) Everton (b) Wolves
(c) West Ham (d) Sheffield United

20 During lockdown, before he was a Premier League winner, a video of Alisson doing what went viral on social media?
(a) Recreating Rene Higuita's 'scorpion-kick' save in his garden
(b) Playing an online gig with Jamie Webster on Instagram Live
(c) Unloading a washing machine full of clean-sheets
(d) Throwing a ball through a skylight on the roof of his house





ANSWERS

1. (b) he's 27 (birthday in October); 2. (a) Internacional; 3. (d) Wojciech Szczesny; 4. (b) Lucas Leiva; 5. (c) Gini Wijnaldum; 6. (b) 13 (Loris Karius was registered as no1 before going out on loan); 7. (a) West Ham; 8. (d) Thomas Meunier but Liverpool won 3-2; 9. (c) Javier Mascherano who went 15 PL games unbeaten at the start of his LFC career in 2007; 10. (a) Riyad Mahrez; 11. (b) guitar; 12. (c) 21; 13. (b) most saves in a CL final without conceding – he made eight; 14. (b) one – a penalty against Peru; 15. (d) Russia's Lev Yashin; 16. (a) Brighton & Hove Albion; 17. (d) black; 18. (c) FIFA Club World Cup with two apps – he's never appeared in the FA Cup, Carabao Cup or UEFA Super Cup; 19. (b) Wolves, during the 2-1 win at Molineux; 20. (d) Throwing a ball through a skylight on the roof of his house but we reckon he should've done all four!


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THE REDS ARE TAKING OVER

Of the 97 points Liverpool took in season 2018/19, only one was against Manchester City. Pep Guardiola's side, on the other hand, took four from the Reds and won the Premier League by a point. So when the Cityzens visited Anfield it already felt like a must-win game, even though it was only November. This time the Reds did the business. A howitzer from Fabinho gave Liverpool a sixth-minute lead. Seven minutes later, Mo Salah headed home Andy Robertson's cross to score a goal reminiscent of Terry McDermott's famous header against Spurs in 1978. City looked like proverbial rabbits caught in the headlights, and when Sadio Mane headed home a third, from Jordan Henderson's cross, six minutes after half-time, it sent a message to Manchester that the Reds are taking over, Guardiola. By the time we met again, Liverpool were champions.


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SUCCESS AT SELHURST PARK

Crystal Palace away immediately after an international break. Mo Salah only fit enough for the bench. Sadio Mane and Andy Robertson playing with knocks. Alisson, Fabinho and Roberto Firmino only arriving back from international duty with Brazil 48 hours earlier. Tricky, very tricky. A points over performance kind of afternoon. Sadio Mane always scores against the Eagles and he did so again, firing a low shot in off both posts and celebrating in his customary style. Palace hit back in the 82nd minute, Wilfried Zaha netting, but the relentless Reds had another goal in them. Virgil van Dijk went up for a corner, there was a scramble in the Crystal Palace box and Firmino was on hand to calmly side-foot home the winner. "Getting a result at Crystal Palace, you never take for granted," said Jürgen Klopp afterwards. "So, it feels good!"

"The main thing, and our bread and butter, is this... And that's what we want to win all the time. Never mind Europe. I'm glad we're in Europe, it's been a great thing for Liverpool, a great thing for the country. But *this* is our bread and butter – and *this* is the one that we want"



Those were Bill Shankly's words, of course, in a TV interview at Anfield in the early Seventies, spoken as he pointed to his left at the old league championship trophy, the camera panning up from its base, past red ribbons to the gleaming silver figure at the top.

Winning leagues: a Liverpool thing. It began in 1901, less than ten years after the club's foundation, with Sunderland pipped by two points after the 'Anfielders', as they were often known in those days, went on a 12-match unbeaten run under manager Tom Watson, with forward Sam Raybould top-scoring with 17 league goals.

Five years later, in their first season back in the big time, the Reds claimed the First Division crown again, finishing four points clear of runners-up Preston North End following a final-day 3-1 win over Sheffield United at Anfield.

The early Twenties brought back-to-back titles. The team went top on Saturday 17 December 1921 with a home win over Manchester United and stayed there till the end of the season, with the *Liverpool Courier* newspaper of 18 April 1922 noting: "All honour then to the wearers of the Red shirt. It has been a long and strenuous struggle and the side has not been free from injuries. Yet all have given of their best, with the result that the championship returns to Merseyside after an absence of many years."

The following season, 1922/23, the Reds went top in mid-September and stayed there under Matt McQueen, who'd replaced David Ashworth as boss halfway through the campaign. The *Liverpool Evening Express* reported: "Consistency is the watchword of the side. They have always finished in the first four for seven consecutive seasons, and after coming out on top in 1921/22 have led the field a merry dance."

Success eluded LFC for the following two decades. But in 1946/47, the first 'proper' season since the war, the Reds under George Kay claimed their fifth title as the average Anfield gate topped 40,000 for the first time.

They had to wait, mind: after a 2-1 win at fellow title-chasers Wolves in their last fixture of the season, on Saturday 31 May 1947, the Reds then had to hang on a further two weeks (till mid-June, just like now) for it to be confirmed by third-placed Stoke City's failure to win at Sheffield United.

The *Evening Express* hailed "a triumph of teamwork, consistency and individual ability...it was a storming finish with eleven out of the last 12 points won despite the fact that the last four matches were away from home."

The Fifties were spent mostly in the old Second Division. Then along came Shankly. Having guided the club back into the big time in 1962, the charismatic Scot secured top-flight title no6 in 1963/64. This time the Reds moved into first place on 30 March 1964 and ultimately finished four points ahead of runners-up Manchester United.

Words: David Cottrell




PREMIER LEAGUE
CHAMPIONS
19|20



They were crowned champions on Saturday 18 April 1964 with a 5-0 win over Arsenal in front of almost 50,000 at Anfield; all the goals were scored before the hour-mark.

On the day of the game the *Liverpool Echo* described the scenes before kick-off: "Thousands were locked out when the gates were closed at 1.45pm with a capacity crowd inside. Scenes outside had been bordering on chaos with mounted police busy controlling the crowds, reinforced by special constabulary.

"From 1.45pm onwards the ground was tightly packed with an exultant crowd waiting for the kick-off. 'They are just singing their heads off – they love it', said an official."

Two seasons later, following an historic first FA Cup win, Liverpool were champions again, finishing six points clear of Leeds United, their erstwhile foes at Wembley. They clinched the title with a 2-1 win over Chelsea at Anfield on 30 April 1966. Roger Hunt got the goals, bringing his total to 32 – the sixth of nine seasons in which he'd be top scorer.

The fans, though, were the stars for the *Daily Post*: "Bill Shankly is right. There's no football crowd anywhere to compare with the Anfield throng for their fervour and spontaneous wit. Entirely original, they are not so much part of a scene as scene-stealers." Naturally Bill felt the best team lost in the following Thursday's Cup Winners Cup final against Borussia Dortmund.

That was the final flourish of Shankly's first great team. It took seven years, but he duly built another one which would win the league. On Saturday 28 April 1973 a goalless draw at home to Leicester City clinched an eighth title, the Reds ultimately three points clear of second-placed Arsenal.

The *Daily Post*: "For colour – Liverpool's vivid red of course – fervour, song and sound, this was the day of days... The league trophy was not unveiled to public view until the final triumphant blast of the referee's whistle. Then out it came to the players in the centre-circle, closely followed by Mr Shankly, whose appearance increased the bedlam to deafening volume.

"As the swaying Kop stretched their scarves end to end, off came the manager's coat to reveal a striking red shirt."

Three weeks later Liverpool lifted the UEFA Cup, beating Borussia Moenchengladbach 3-2 on aggregate.

So to the most sustained period of Liverpool FC's domestic dominance. Shankly had built the foundations, and successor Bob Paisley continued the all-conquering work. Season 1975/76 saw another league and UEFA Cup double: a ninth top-flight title with Keegan and Toshack once again the dynamic duo upfront and Bruges beaten over two legs.



After the dramatic title-clinching win at Wolves the *Echo* reported: "On a night of a thousand memories one outstanding fact emerged. This was the night when the Liverpool fans, particularly the Kopites, finally took Paisley to their hearts, recognising him as the great manager he is.

"They will always have a special affection for Bill Shankly but now they have their own regard for Bob as well. Perhaps it will never be as flamboyant as the Shankly links with the Kop, but it is deep, sincere, and based on a recognition of this man's special qualities."

It just kept getting better. In 1976/77 the Reds paired title no10 with a first European Cup success. In 1978/79 they accumulated a record 68 points under the old two-points-for-a-win format and established a record for conceding the fewest goals, 16, by a top-flight side. And in 1979/80 a twelfth title was clinched with victory over Aston Villa, just like the previous season.

Villa took the crown themselves in 1980/81, after which Liverpool won three titles on the run for the first time in their history – indeed they became the only club to achieve this feat since the war.

No13 was won on Saturday 15 May 1982 with victory over a Spurs side featuring Liverpool old boy Ray Clemence in goal, a rapturous Kop saluting goals by Mark Lawrenson, Kenny Dalglish and Ronnie Whelan.



Manager Bob Paisley called it "the hardest of them all to win. This season we have changed the team about and brought in new players. The toughest part of this job is producing new players at the right time.

"In this job you've always got people telling you what you should do. They tell you to bring in new players but it isn't as easy as that. There comes a point when you have to say to the youngsters: 'You've had your education – now go through with it'."

In 1982/83 the Reds finished eleven points clear of Graham Taylor's Watford, having stayed top since the end of October. In 1983/84 the title formed part of a treble with the European Cup and League Cup.

This time fans on the Kop stayed behind for 40 minutes after the clincher at home to Norwich City to hail their heroes – one of whom, Ian Rush, had scored 47 goals in all competitions.

While banned from European competition after the Heysel disaster, Liverpool pipped neighbours Everton to the league and FA Cup double in 1985/86 under player-manager Dalglish.

The title was won at Chelsea on Saturday 3 May 1986, the *Daily Post* describing the celebrations as "so familiar that anyone who had been isolated from the English game for the past year or so could have found no reason to believe Liverpool Football Club had suffered a catastrophe last May. No club in the country was better equipped to take such a blow and recover so quickly."

Two years later, having finished runners-up to the Toffees the previous season, a scintillating new side assembled by Kenny finished nine points clear of Manchester United, although another double was thwarted by Wimbledon in the FA Cup final.



The 18th title triumph was confirmed on Tuesday 1 May 1990 with a 1-0 victory over Derby County at Anfield, featuring an 18-minute cameo by player-manager Dalglish as a substitute; this just 12 months after Hillsborough and the last-gasp defeat by Arsenal at Anfield which, somehow, hadn't seemed to matter so much.



And then, more or less with the advent of the Premier League, it stopped. In the light of his modern team's record-breaking title triumph Jürgen Klopp remarked: "I have learned when you think you have reached the pinnacle, you are already on the way down."

Whether it was the burden of being the best for so long, or the incalculable trauma in the long dark shadow of Hillsborough, or simply someone else's turn to be top, it took three decades for the Reds to regain their crown.

They came close five times, finishing as runners-up in season 1990/91 (six points behind Arsenal), 2001/02 (seven behind the Gunners), 2008/09 (four behind Manchester United), 2013/14 (two behind Manchester City) and 2018/19 (one behind City).

Three of those near-misses featured Steven Gerrard, arguably the greatest midfielder of his generation. Right player, right club, not quite – agonisingly – the right time.

But he, as much as any Liverpool supporter, will be hoping title no20 is heading this way soon.

• This is an updated version of the article which originally appeared in the book LFC 125: The Alternative History, published by Reach Sport in 2017.





BOOM SHAQA LAKA

To be champions of England you need a squad of players capable of producing when called upon, not simply a team. If any game proved that to be true, Liverpool's 5-2 Merseyside derby victory against Everton at Anfield in December was it. Amongst the starting XI that night were Adrian, Dejan Lovren, Adam Lallana, James Milner, Naby Keita, Xherdan Shaqiri and Divock Origi. Not all are regular starters, yet you wouldn't have known it from the way Everton were dismantled with the Reds racking up four first-half goals. Origi got two of them, one assisted by Lovren, and also on target was Shaqiri, no stranger to scoring on the big occasion. Shaq scored twice in a 3-1 victory against Manchester United last season and added a Merseyside derby goal to his collection here, celebrating with a good old-fashioned knee-slide on the Anfield turf!


SHAQIRI
23


EXANDER-ARNOLD
66



TRENT IS ONE IN A KYLIAN

"Yeah, I saw! I'm proud. This guy is amazing!" Paris Saint-Germain striker Kylian Mbappe when asked if he'd seen Trent Alexander-Arnold celebrating his goal in Liverpool's 4-0 Boxing Day win at Leicester City by copying his trademark 'folded arms' celebration. Trent's goal, on an evening when he also got two assists and had a corner handled to win a penalty, capped off an outstanding individual display widely regarded as the best of his Liverpool career so far. It was also a huge win for the Redmen. Brendan Rodgers' Foxes were second in the Premier League at the time, but a Bobby Firmino double and James Milner's spot-kick had them beaten before Alexander-Arnold's brilliant strike. With Manchester City losing at Wolves the following day, the Reds went 13 points clear and were never caught.


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11



CHRIS GOES WILD FOR LFC

Start the decade as you mean to go on and Liverpool did so, beating Sheffield United 2-0 at Anfield in their first game of 2020. Goals from Mo Salah and Sadio Mane secured the points, but perhaps the most remarkable thing was the post-match praise Blades boss Chris Wilder gave to the Reds. "You just look at the appetite and the desire of everybody around the football club, it's got a feeling of a relentlessness about them and the supporters as well, the way they drive their players on. They realise what a huge, important season it is and a fantastic position they're in. I love everything about them, the way they go about tactical and technical players. But the top bit, the physical and mental part of it, is amazing, and if that's good enough for them it's certainly good enough for anybody else."


NB DRY



BOBBY DAZZLES SPURS

Tottenham Hotspur have a world-class new stadium and a world-class Roberto Firmino goal gave Liverpool all three points on their first visit there. Seeing Mo Salah's pass heading towards him, Firmino tricked Spurs defender Japhet Tanganga by allowing the ball to run across his right foot instead, as most forwards would, instead of striking it goalwards immediately. Bobby then took a touch on his left and slammed the ball into the net, giving the Reds a 1-0 win and adding a few more records to the collection. Like going a club-record 38 games unbeaten, setting a Premier League record for winning at a 56th different away venue and taking 61 points from their opening 21 league games. No side in any of Europe's 'big five' leagues has ever done that before. What. A. Team.

"THIS IS FOR THE FANS"

On behalf of the team Gini Wijnaldum has a special message for Reds supporters everywhere, and a tribute for the captain and the boss



SO HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A PREMIER LEAGUE WINNER?
It's a real great feeling. This is something that we dreamed of, something that we really wanted, especially after winning the Champions League. We wanted to win the Premier League for ourselves but also for the fans because they waited so long for this trophy, so we are happy that we can give it to them.

DID WINNING THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GIVE YOU A RENEWED BELIEF?
I think we already had that before that. If you see the games that we played last season even before we won the Champions League I think you could see that.

In the Premier League last season the last few games were really difficult to win because we were going head-to-head with Manchester City for the title and we were both winning our games.

There we saw that we were capable of doing really good things, so I already had the confidence but you always have to see how it will go through the season. But this season it has gone really well.

WERE YOU SURPRISED BY THE GAP OF YOUR LEAD – 23 POINTS ABOVE CITY WHEN THE TITLE WAS CONFIRMED?
I know that we have a team that is capable of doing these things but I also know that City has a team that is capable of doing it. As I said before, last season we were going head-to-head and they were winning almost all of their games, we were winning almost all of our games. So we knew that we could do it but you still have to actually go and do it.

When you win all your games, you are just hoping that City are going to drop points somewhere and luckily for us they did that this time which made it easier for us.





WHAT WAS IT LIKE WATCHING THE CHELSEA-CITY GAME TOGETHER AT THE HOTEL?

For me it was not really good because I'm really nervous. When you're not playing you can't control the game so that's really difficult for me. When I'm playing it's easier. So I was really nervous, I think more so than other players. I'm a bad spectator.

AND CAN YOU SUM UP HOW YOU FELT AT THE FINAL WHISTLE?

You are really happy because you've finally reached the target that we all dreamed of. We wanted it so much, not only for ourselves but for the whole club. The whole club has been waiting so long for this Premier League title and, of course, also the fans.

The fans Liverpool have are such loyal fans who have been waiting so long for this title and that makes it even more beautiful.



YOU BEAT CITY 3-1 AT ANFIELD IN NOVEMBER – CAN YOU REMEMBER YOUR EMOTIONS GOING INTO THAT GAME BACK?
To be fair the way we were looking at it was the same as every other game. Of course Manchester City are a really good team and it is usually a very good game between us. They are one of the best teams in the league but they are also a team that suits us with the way we want to play and the way they play, so we always look forward to playing against City.

It's also a chance to see how far we are in our development so yes, we were looking forward to that game and to play it.

WHAT DID JÜRGEN KLOPP SAY TO THE TEAM AS YOU HEADED OUT ONTO THE PITCH?
It was not like he said different things to normal. It was just the things that he usually says, like we have to play with freedom, give 100 per cent and not think about anything else. It was just that we had to give our all and at the end of the game we would see what the score was.

Basically it was a reminder of those things and also the things that we worked on in training to play against them. To stick to the plan and do the things that we usually do.

HOW WERE YOU FEELING?
Really good. As I say, Manchester City is a team that you really want to play against because I think they are one the best teams in the world. Also when you play at Anfield, you know how the crowd is with the atmosphere, especially when you play against good teams.

Of course we also knew the situation that both teams were in and that it probably would be a big game in the title race. Those fixtures are different to other games and as a footballer you want to play in as many such games as this one.

THERE WAS A KEY PASSAGE OF PLAY AS EARLY AS THE FIFTH MINUTE WHEN CITY CLAIMED A HANDBALL AGAINST TRENT ALEXANDER-ARNOLD BUT NO PENALTY WAS GIVEN AND YOU WENT UP THE OTHER END AND SCORED A WONDERFUL GOAL THROUGH FABINHO...
The question was around whether or not it was handball but I think there was first a handball by Bernardo Silva and the referee [Michael Oliver] let it play on. Then there was the handball off Trent and he let it play on again, so this is one of the things that can happen in football.

The ref could have also said free-kick to Liverpool because Bernardo made the handball first so maybe he thought I'll let it play after Trent made a handball.

Manchester City were complaining about the situation but I think they had enough time to defend the goal that we made and, as I say, there were two solutions: a free-kick to us because Bernardo Silva made the first handball or just let it play because both teams made a handball. We carried on and made a goal. I don't think the City players saw Bernardo make the handball. They were saying to me, "Trent made the handball" so I was saying, "Yes but Bernardo made a handball too!"

THERE WERE 22 SECONDS BETWEEN TRENT'S ALLEGED HANDBALL AND THE GOAL BUT IT WAS HARD TO CELEBRATE IT PROPERLY WITH THE GOAL BEING REFERRED TO VAR...
I was not that far from the situation when it happened but you always know that they can change things around, especially now with the VAR, so I was not sure if the goal was going to count. You always have to see what will happen.

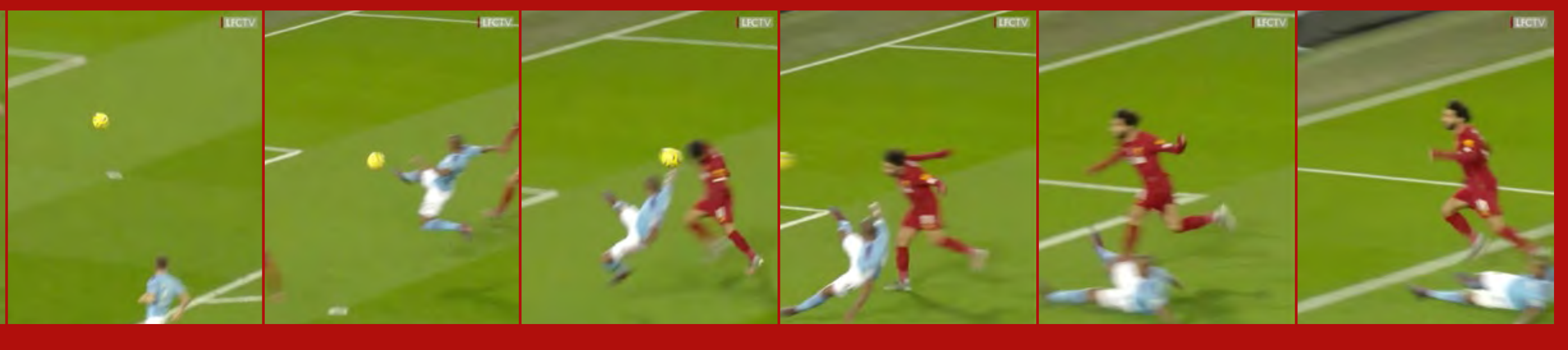


You know these days you can celebrate like crazy and end up with your goal being disallowed. That is something new this season and something that I don't like, but on the other hand decisions tend to be fair so I guess you have to have one or the other.

YOU WERE RIGHT BEHIND THE STRIKE FROM FABINHO TOO...
Yes and at that point I had never seen him hit a ball like that ever before! I think it was a surprise for all of us when he shot the ball with that power and speed into the goal!

MO SALAH'S HEADER THEN PUT YOU 2-0 UP AFTER JUST 13 MINUTES. STARTS DON'T GET MUCH BETTER, DO THEY?
No. You are always searching for starts like this. I have to say that from what I can remember of that game it was hard because I think they had two set-pieces in the first minute of the game, two corner-kicks. Those are the kind of things that you don't want because with a corner-kick anything can happen. But after the goal from Fabinho and then the goal from Mo, we had a good feeling.

WHAT WAS THE KEY TO HIS GOAL?
It was a really good goal with a switch of play from Trent before Robbo sped up and crossed from a distance. He didn't go to the by-line, he just crossed it early and Mo was there and he headed it diagonally across the goalkeeper. It was a great goal. Also it was really quick with the switch of play, the speed of the cross and Mo's reaction and goal. I think that was very important.





Trent to Robbo to Salah before it hits the back of the net

GETTING TO HALF-TIME WITH THAT CLEAN-SHEET INTACT MUST ALSO HAVE HELPED, WITH CITY GOING CLOSE A COUPLE OF TIMES...

I think that's always important in football in general. You always want to keep the lead and you don't want to concede a goal shortly before half-time because the mood will be different when you concede at that stage. We tried to stop them but, as I say, City are such a good team with such good players that they can always force something and that's what they did with those chances.

I have to say also that when we play against them it costs a lot of energy, so sometimes it is difficult to close the gaps. They have such good players that they can use those moments and that's what they did there and we were lucky that they didn't score.



IT WAS A GREAT GOAL. ALSO IT WAS REALLY QUICK WITH THE SWITCH OF PLAY, THE SPEED OF THE CROSS AND MO'S REACTION AND GOAL. I THINK THAT WAS VERY IMPORTANT

IT WAS EQUALLY IMPORTANT NOT TO GET CARRIED AWAY WITH THE START THAT YOU'D MADE AT 2-0 UP SO EARLY IN THE GAME...

Yes. You know, we've had situations a couple of years before where we were maybe carried away by scorelines. But over the years, we have learned so much with this group of players.

This is a group that has been playing together for a few years and we were in the game and we were talking with each other that we had to stay focused and we had to do the same things and everything.

With City you know that they are such a good team that they can turn things around and so you have to be 100 per cent concentrated because otherwise they might draw level again or come ahead. I think we have learnt a lot from the past and we stayed focused.

WHAT WAS THE HALF-TIME MESSAGE, THE MANAGER MAKING A SWITCH IN FORMATION WITH JORDAN HENDERSON PLAYING FROM THE RIGHT?

The manager is normally searching for moments in the game where we have to do better. We analysed the first half really quickly because you don't have that long and that's what we do in every game. It was that long ago now that I can't remember exactly what he did with the change in formation but we did switch it slightly with Hendo going to the right.

AND THE SKIPPER PLAYED A BIG PART IN THE CRUCIAL THIRD GOAL SIX MINUTES INTO THE SECOND-HALF WITH SADIO MANE EXTENDING THE LEAD...

I think everyone thought Hendo might look to play a one-two or pass the ball or something but he just ran to the by-line and put over a great cross and Sadio was in the right spot to score.

AT 3-0 WERE YOU THINKING 'GAME OVER'?

No! In the Premier League you never know. The teams are so good that they can turn things around, especially with City who have unbelievable players and an unbelievable team. So we knew that they could turn it around. But, of course, you have a comfortable feeling because we had played well, the score was 3-0 and we were at home with the fans behind us.

We were still aware that it could change. We'd had a game a few years before against City at Anfield where we led 4-1 and they brought it back to 4-3. As I said earlier, back then maybe we got carried away with the scoreline that we had, but now I think we manage those situations quite well.

WITH 12 MINUTES TO GO, CITY GOT BACK INTO THE GAME AT 3-1 THROUGH BERNARDO SILVA. WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

Just 'don't get nervous' and 'bring the game to a good end'. We were angry, as you could see with Jürgen's reaction, because we thought it was a foul on Fabinho in the build-up. But the referee didn't give that one.

We were all a bit emotional but those things happen. With our first goal, maybe we were lucky that he let the handballs go, and here we were unlucky. Sometimes you are lucky, sometimes you are not.



THE FULL-TIME WHISTLE CAME AND IT PUT LIVERPOOL EIGHT POINTS CLEAR AT THE TOP OF THE TABLE AND NINE ABOVE CITY. HOW IMPORTANT DID THAT FEEL, EVEN AT THAT POINT?

The way we were thinking about it was that the season before we were also something like eight or nine points ahead. So we didn't ever think anything like: okay, City is gone – they will not catch us. It was more like: okay, that was a good game, we won, it is three points more than we had before but we have to keep going.

Last season we had seen what can happen when you don't perform and when you don't win games, so we don't ever really get carried away with the result and I have to say that has been the same until the last game that we played. We haven't got carried away with results, we have always said: 'til the end, 'til the end, 'til the end. And that's what we have been doing.

I have to say it is the first time that I have seen that mentality in a team and we have been so strict with it. I have been a champion at PSV before and at that time we also had a lot of points more than Ajax but at that moment we were already like: okay, we are going to finish champions, when are we going to finish champions? But here we have not been busy with that. We just wanted to perform and, of course, at the end we would see.

I always joked with Henderson because he really didn't like it when we said we have to win two games or something like that. We always made jokes with him like, "Hendo, two games more and then we're champions!" He didn't like it but he accepted it!

WE ALWAYS MADE JOKES WITH HIM LIKE, "HENDO, TWO GAMES MORE AND THEN WE'RE CHAMPIONS..." HE DIDN'T LIKE IT BUT HE ACCEPTED IT!

IS JORDAN HENDERSON KEY TO KEEPING THAT DRIVEN MENTALITY WITHIN THE GROUP?
I think it's the mentality in the team. I think it also comes from the manager, yes from Hendo but also Milner and all the players just trying to keep everyone's feet on the ground. That's because we know that there is also still space for development and that we can get better.

That's why we train really hard. We are busy with each other to make each other better and get a better team. That's how we look at it. And I think that's why it has gone so well and that's why we perform and why we learn. We don't want to stop performing and we don't want to stop getting results. We are hungry for more.

So I think that's why it's gone so well because it is not only one player or only the coaches who think like that. Right now I think it's the mentality of the whole team, of the club and of the supporters.

DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE FANS AS YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE WITH THEM?
Unfortunately we cannot but hopefully they will find a solution for that before too long. All I can say is congratulations and I want to say thank you for all the support you guys give us.

It is also a title that we won because of you, because during the years that I've been here – and I think way before me coming here too – you have been such loyal supporters and helped the club going forwards even through years where it was really difficult.

This is something you definitely deserve for all the support you have given throughout the years.

AND A WORD FOR THE MANAGER AS YOU'VE CLEARLY GONE FROM STRENGTH-TO-STRENGTH SINCE HIS ARRIVAL?
Yes. When he came in he changed a lot of things. He wanted to do things how he wanted and it's worked well. I think we as players, and I as a player, are really lucky that we can be part of the development that his team has and this great club has.

I saw it – and I think most of the players saw it – from the beginning, and during the years we have seen the development we were making with the team and it's unbelievable.

I'm so happy that I'm part of this team.





A.BECKER
1
TOMMY



CAUGHT IN THE MO-MENT

This was the mo-ment, wasn't it? The moment when Anfield collectively went from doubters to believers and told the word about it. A Virgil van Dijk goal behind, Manchester United were desperately seeking a late equaliser when Alisson grabbed a weak Aaron Wan-Bissaka shot. Spotting Mo Salah with the freedom of Anfield on the half-way line, the Liverpool goalkeeper played a perfect pass for the Egyptian King to run onto and slide the ball beneath David de Gea. The noise that greeted the goal must have been heard in Manchester. Salah whipped off his shirt to celebrate and Alisson ran the full length of the field to join him as Anfield, for the first time all season, reverberated to "And now you're gonna believe us, we're gonna win the league!" And Liverpool did. By a mile.



DANCES WITH WOLVES

Liverpool's 22nd Premier League win of the season, in their 23rd game, came at Molineux, den of the Wolves. It was yet another game that the Reds won late on, and also the 11th league match of the season when Jürgen Klopp's side emerged victorious by one goal. Such a statistic says everything about this team's irrepressible mindset. Jordan Henderson's early goal, a rare header from the skipper to meet Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner, gave Liverpool the lead, but Sadio Mane soon departed injured. Takumi Minamino made his Premier League debut, but Raul Jimenez equalised and the home side looked likely winners. Alisson denied the Mexican and Adama Traore, then up popped Bobby Firmino again with his 10th goal of the season to win it. 'Mentality monsters' or what?




FIRMINO
9
CHAMBERLAIN
15



UNHAPPY HAMMERS

Why do we get the feeling these crowd stewards at the London Stadium aren't Liverpool FC supporters? Jürgen Klopp's 150th win as LFC manager was a 2-0 success at West Ham in their game-in-hand, postponed from December when the Reds were winning the FIFA Club World Cup in Qatar. It was also the night when they completed the full set of beating all 19 Premier League rivals in the same season, doing so in their 24th game. And, in case anyone doubted the significance of the number 19 in 2019/20, this victory sent the Redmen 19 points clear at the top. Mo Salah was spot-on with the opener, after Divock Origi was fouled, and you can see how much Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain enjoyed scoring the second, even if the stewards weren't such happy Hammers.


BLACK
LIVES
MATTER



CHAMPIONS ELECT

'Twas the night before Ch...ampions! After three months without a game at Anfield due to the suspension of football, Liverpool finally played a home game again. It was Anfield's first-ever behind closed doors competitive fixture – both a necessity and a pity as the Reds played like champions elect. Crystal Palace were swept aside 4-0. A Trent Alexander-Arnold free-kick, a Mo Salah volley and a Fabinho long-range stunner, BBC Match of the Day's goal of the months for March and June combined, had the Redmen 3-0 up. And for the fourth Salah set Mane clear of the Eagles' defence to net before the pair celebrated together. A day later, after Man City lost at Chelsea, we were all celebrating. Liverpool FC were Premier League champions.

What's On

ALL YOURS, CAPTAIN...

Champions League, Super Cup, Club World Cup, Premier League... It's been some year-and-a-bit for Jordan Henderson, his team-mates and all of us who love the Reds. And now, after a wait of more than 11,000 days, Liverpool FC supporters will finally get to see a sight they have really, really longed for.

The final home game of the season against Chelsea on Wednesday 22 July 2020 will see the captain presented with the Premier League trophy, ending that 30-year wait for a top-flight title.

The game could also see Liverpool celebrate by becoming the first team to win all their home games in a top-flight season since Sunderland in 1891/92 (when they won all 13 matches).

Had supporters been allowed inside Anfield for the occasion, Jürgen Klopp might even have granted them permission to sing his name!




B
NIVEA MEN
CREME
NIVEA MEN
CREME
M







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T&CS APPLY

A GIFT FROM ROBBO





The dramatic story behind the donation of a Reds home shirt owned by the late Michael Robinson to the Liverpool FC Story Museum

Liverpool FC is delighted to have received a shirt belonging but never worn by the late Michael Robinson. "The shirt has quite a story," explains Stephen Done, the club's museum curator. "It's been donated in Michael's memory by a theatre group and one day will go into the Liverpool FC museum."

The no15 jersey features European Cup final embroidery, but it seems certain it was not the one worn by Michael when he replaced Kenny Dalglish in the 95th minute of the 1984 European Cup final against AS Roma.

A spokesman for Vauxy Theatre, a community group based at the Rotunda Community College in Kirkdale, takes up the story: "We needed an LFC shirt to wear on stage in a play entitled Wearing Colours. It was written by John Dillon, a lifelong supporter of LFC who lives near the Melwood training ground.

"The subject of the play is the Heysel Stadium disaster in 1985 and it was written and first performed only five months after the tragedy by the Vauxy.

It received an excellent review by Joe Riley in the Liverpool Echo and subsequently went on to have great success at the Edinburgh Festival the following year, even being the subject of a BBC2 documentary."

However, without funding or take-up by either of the two professional theatre companies in the city at that time, the play disappeared. The Vauxy had planned to revive the production in 1989 but following the Hillsborough tragedy it was decided to put it back until the following year.

The spokesman continues: "The play reopened in the Liverpool Playhouse Studio, once more to great acclaim by audiences, and went on to tour clubs and pubs throughout Merseyside, even performing in the old Derby Arms, which then stood outside the gates of Melwood, and also the Deysbrook bar on a stage made up of boards on beer crates!

"Wherever it was seen, it touched a nerve and allowed fans to grieve for the victims, a grief which had been suppressed by associated guilt. But the play was not just about Heysel, not just for LFC supporters, not just for football fans.

"Its content was a comment on the universal human condition when people become embroiled in unexpected and challenging events, reacting in very personal ways.

"Wearing Colours explored the reactions of four, unique individuals on the 29 May 1985."

The play went on to be made into a TV drama and was broadcast on ITV, in the Yorkshire Television region only, on 29 May 1990. Michael's shirt was worn in the production by the youngest of the four fans, played by real-life Reds supporter Neil Fitzmaurice who would co-write the hit comedy Phoenix Nights with Peter Kay.

A fitting tribute to a man who loved Liverpool Football Club.



“Newcastle were undressed!”



WIN copies of a new book celebrating Liverpool’s FA Cup triumph of 1973/74

“And Shanks’ army, this Liverpool side, swarming forward now. Hall...KEEGAN! Goals pay the rent and Keegan does his share.”

Iconic David Coleman commentary of the opening goal in Liverpool’s 3-0 win against Newcastle United in the 1974 FA Cup final at Wembley. And the way he described the third, also scored by Keegan, was just as memorable. “Callaghan’s available behind Keegan. Beautiful ball to Smith, he didn’t have to move to get it. Hall to Smith. Heighway...Liverpool showing their party pieces, he wasn’t offside, Smith...YES! Keegan’s second and Newcastle were undressed. They were absolutely stripped naked!”

Now you can re-live the entire FA Cup campaign thanks to a new book – Magic of the Cup: 1973/74.

Written by Dave Bowler, whose previous books include Shanks: The Authorised Biography, it tells the story of the 1973/74 FA Cup both on an off the pitch. And only 1,000 copies have been printed.

From midweek replays being held on afternoons due to a floodlight ban and the Reds almost getting knocked out by lowly Doncaster Rovers, to giving the Magpies a footballing lesson at Wembley and Bill Shankly’s shock resignation two months later, every twist and turn is covered.

It’s a fascinating read and we’ve got three copies – appropriately numbered 65, 74 and 86 – to give away in our exclusive competition. To be in with a chance of winning one, simply tell us:

Kevin Keegan scored twice, but who netted Liverpool’s other goal in the 1974 final v Newcastle United?

Email your answer, name and address with ‘Magic of the Cup Competition’ in the subject bar to liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com – closing date is Friday 31 July 2020, normal competition rules apply.

Kevin Keegan scored twice, but who netted Liverpool’s other goal in the 1974 final v Newcastle United?





• Last month’s SoccerStarz competition winner was Chloe Chadwick of Stoke-on-Trent

WHAT'S IN

Show your support for the **NHS** with the **LFC Foundation Big Red Charity Collection.** All profits from the collection will be donated to NHS Charities Together – supporting NHS staff and volunteers caring for COVID-19 patients, as well as supporting the LFC Foundation's response and recovery work during the pandemic and over the coming months.
The winning design by eight-year-old Reds fanatic Daniel displays a rainbow football held up by red hands, which demonstrates togetherness and teamwork, along with 'YNWA' text and charity logos for LFC Foundation and NHS Charities Together.



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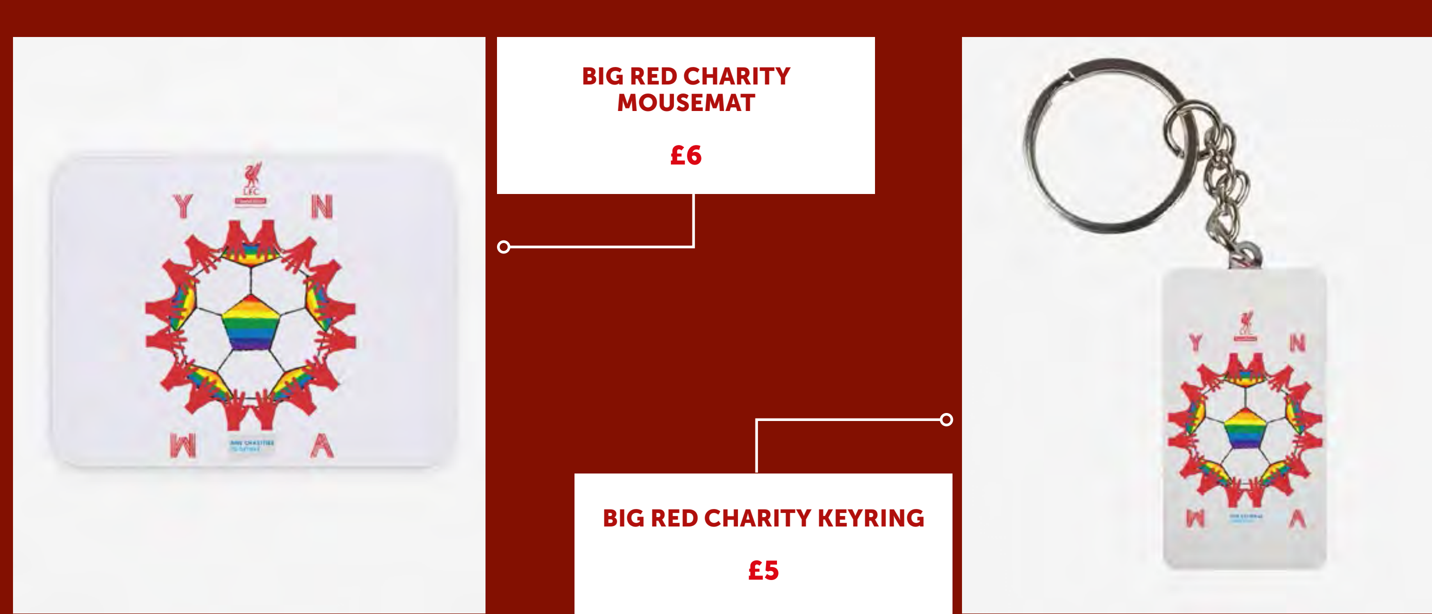
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2019/20 Fixtures & Results

AUGUST		SCORE/KO	TV	SCORERS
Sun 04	Manchester City (CS, N)	1-1*	BT	Matip (pens: Shaqiri, Lallana, Chamberlain, Salah)
Fri 09	**Norwich City (H)**	**4-1**	**Sky**	**Hanley (OG), Salah, Van Dijk, Origi**
Wed 14	Chelsea (Super Cup, N)	2-2**	BT	Mane 2 (pens: Firmino, Fabinho, Origi, A-Arnold, Salah)
Sat 17	Southampton (A)	2-1		Mane, Firmino
Sat 24	**Arsenal (H)**	**3-1**	**Sky**	**Matip, Salah 2 (1 pen)**
Sat 31	Burnley (A)	3-0	Sky	Wood (OG), Mane, Firmino
SEPTEMBER				
Sat 14	**Newcastle United (H)**	**3-1**	**BT**	**Mane 2, Salah**
Tue 17	Napoli (UCL Matchday 1, A)	0-2	BT	
Sun 22	Chelsea (A)	2-1	Sky	Alexander-Arnold, Firmino
Wed 25	MK Dons (Carabao Cup 3, A)	2-0	Sky	Milner, Hoever
Sat 28	Sheffield United (A)	1-0	BT	Wijnaldum
OCTOBER				
Wed 02	**Salzburg (UCL Matchday 2, H)**	**4-3**	**BT**	**Mane, Robertson, Salah 2**
Sat 05	**Leicester City (H)**	**2-1**		**Mane, Milner (pen)**
Sun 20	Manchester United (A)	1-1	Sky	Lallana
Wed 23	Genk (UCL Matchday 3, A)	4-1	BT	Oxlade-Chamberlain 2, Mane, Salah
Sun 27	**Tottenham Hotspur (H)**	**2-1**	**Sky**	**Henderson, Salah (pen)**
Wed 30	Arsenal (Carabao Cup 4, H)	5-5**	Sky	Mustafi (OG), Milner (pen), Oxlade-Chamberlain, Origi 2 (pens: Milner, Lallana, Brewster, Origi, Jones)
NOVEMBER				
Sat 02	Aston Villa (A)	2-1		Robertson, Mane
Tue 05	**Genk (UCL Matchday 4, H)**	**2-1**	**BT**	**Wijnaldum, Oxlade-Chamberlain**
Sun 10	**Manchester City (H)**	**3-1**	**Sky**	**Fabinho, Salah, Mane**
Sat 23	Crystal Palace (A)	2-1		Mane, Firmino
Wed 27	**Napoli (UCL Matchday 5, H)**	**1-1**	**BT**	**Lovren**
Sat 30	**Brighton (H)**	**2-1**		**Van Dijk 2**
DECEMBER				
Wed 04	**Everton (H)**	**5-2**	**AP**	**Origi 2, Shaqiri, Mane, Wijnaldum**
Sat 07	Bournemouth (A)	3-0		Oxlade-Chamberlain, Keita, Salah
Tue 10	Salzburg (UCL Matchday 6, A)	2-0	BT	Keita, Mane, Salah
Sat 14	**Watford (H)**	**2-0**	**BT**	**Salah 2**
Tue 17	Aston Villa (Carabao Cup QF, A)	0-5	Sky	
Wed 18	Monterrey (CWC SF)	2-1	BBC	Keita, Firmino
Sat 21	Flamengo (CWF final)	1-0^	BBC	Firmino
Thu 26	Leicester City (A)	4-0	AP	Firmino 2, Milner (pen), Alexander-Arnold
Sun 29	**Wolverhampton W (H)**	**1-0**	**Sky**	**Mane**
JANUARY				
Thu 02	**Sheffield United (H)**	**2-0**	**BT**	**Salah, Mane**
Sun 05	Everton (FA Cup 3, H)	1-0	BBC	Jones
Sat 11	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	1-0	Sky	Firmino
Sun 19	**Manchester United (H)**	**2-0**	**Sky**	**Van Dijk, Salah**
Thu 23	Wolverhampton W (A)	2-1	BT	Henderson, Firmino
Sun 26	Shrewsbury Town (FA Cup 4, A)	2-2	BBC	Jones, Love (OG)
Wed 29	West Ham United (A)	2-0		Salah (pen), Oxlade-Chamberlain
FEBRUARY				
Sat 01	**Southampton (H)**	**4-0**		**Oxlade-Chamberlain, Henderson, Salah 2**
Tue 04	Shrewsbury Town (FA Cup 4Rep, H)	1-0		Williams (OG)
Sat 15	Norwich City (A)	1-0	Sky	Mane
Tue 18	Atletico Madrid (UCL R of 16 1)	0-1	BT	
Mon 24	**West Ham United (H)**	**3-2**	**Sky**	**Wijnaldum, Salah, Mane**
Sat 29	Watford (A)	0-3	Sky	
MARCH				
Tue 03	Chelsea (FA Cup 5, A)	0-2	BBC	
Sat 07	**Bournemouth (H)**	**2-1**	**BT**	**Salah, Mane**
Wed 11	**Atletico Madrid (UCL R of 16 2)**	**2-3^**	**BT**	**Wijnaldum, Firmino**
JUNE				
Sun 21	Everton (A)	0-0	Sky	
Wed 24	**Crystal Palace (H)**	**4-0**	**Sky**	**Alexander-Arnold, Salah, Fabinho, Mane**
JULY				
Thu 02	Manchester City (A)	0-4	Sky	
Sun 05	**Aston Villa (H)**	**2-0**	**Sky**	**Mane, Jones**
Wed 08	Brighton (A)	8.15pm	Sky	
Sat 11	**Burnley (H)**	**3pm**	**BT**	
Wed 15	Arsenal (A)	8.15pm	Sky	
Wed 22	**Chelsea (H)**	**8.15pm**	**Sky**	
Sun 26	Newcastle United (A)	4pm		

All fixtures subject to change. AP = Amazon Prime *lost 5-4 on pens ** won 5-4 on pens ^after extra-time

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NEIL MELLOR

I don't believe there are many other clubs in the world that have the same unity as LFC – and that is credit to Klopp

Liverpool were nowhere near challenging for the Premier League title when Jürgen Klopp was appointed as manager in 2015.

The Reds had competed for the title under Brendan Rodgers in 2013/14 but then lost Luis Suarez and finished sixth the following season, eight points outside the top four. There was optimism that Klopp could turn Liverpool back into a side that qualifies for the Champions League, but at the end of his first season here even that felt a long way off following an eighth-place finish.

Four years later Liverpool are Premier League champions, having also won the Champions League, Super Cup and Club World Cup.

What a job Jürgen Klopp has done.

When you look at how he turned Borussia Dortmund into title-winners in Germany, Jürgen has always been a manager who demands that his players work hard, have a high intensity in training and take that into matchdays. From day one at Liverpool, the intensity increased for the players.

To remain part of his plans they had to cope with that workload and it meant that players such as Jordan Henderson, James Milner and Roberto Firmino thrived. All three work extremely hard, but also have the quality to go with it.

Jürgen recognised that – but also the need to bring in reinforcements. Recruiting players with pace was a big thing. Sadio Mane, Mo Salah, Andy Robertson were all brought in, Trent Alexander-Arnold was developed. All have been key players and all have given Liverpool pace.

Then, in the last couple of seasons he made two huge defensive signings in Virgil van Dijk and Alisson. They are the best in their positions in world football and when, if ever, have Liverpool been in a position to sign the best players in those positions in world football?

He was fortunate that Steven Gerrard had left the football club before he came in and didn't have to deal with that, but in 2018 he lost arguably his best player at the time, Philippe Coutinho, to Barcelona. It looked like a big blow but Liverpool have not missed him.

Since Coutinho left the club Liverpool have been to two Champions League finals and challenged twice for the Premier League title, winning each once. In the past Liverpool couldn't cope with losing a key player, but under Klopp the team has got better after losing a key player. That is a massive difference.

Another big factor is the togetherness Jürgen has brought to LFC. The fans, staff, players, the Academy – everyone feels part of Liverpool Football Club. I don't believe there are many other clubs in the world that have the same unity, and that is credit to Klopp. It has paid dividends with Alexander-Arnold going from Academy prospect to arguably the best right-back in the world, and now Curtis Jones is on the fringes of the first-team. Other young players, such as Harvey Elliott, wanted to come to Liverpool because the manager isn't frightened to play them.

Being a manager liked by everyone is very difficult, but Jürgen has that appeal. He'll tell players off when they need to be told off, but who doesn't love a hug when you do something good? When Jürgen throws one of those big hugs around his players it is great to see and he is a manager who uses his personality to get the best out of his players.

Crucially, Liverpool also adapted to the way football has changed. In recent times the two Manchester clubs and Chelsea used their financial power to buy the best players, but buying the best goalkeeper and central defender in the world enabled Liverpool to kick on and win the Champions League in 2019. For me, that was a big turning point.

Liverpool had lost a Europa League final, a Champions League final and finished as runners-up in the Premier League. Getting over the final hurdle was a problem, but in Madrid that all changed.

The confidence gained from being champions of Europe has grown throughout the squad and now they have become Super Cup holders, club world champions and Premier League winners.

The boys know how to win. The confidence is there and, thanks to the job Jürgen Klopp has done, so too is the silverware.



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Together, We Made History



























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